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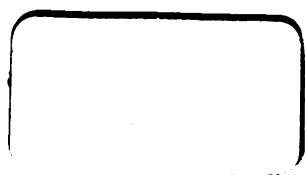
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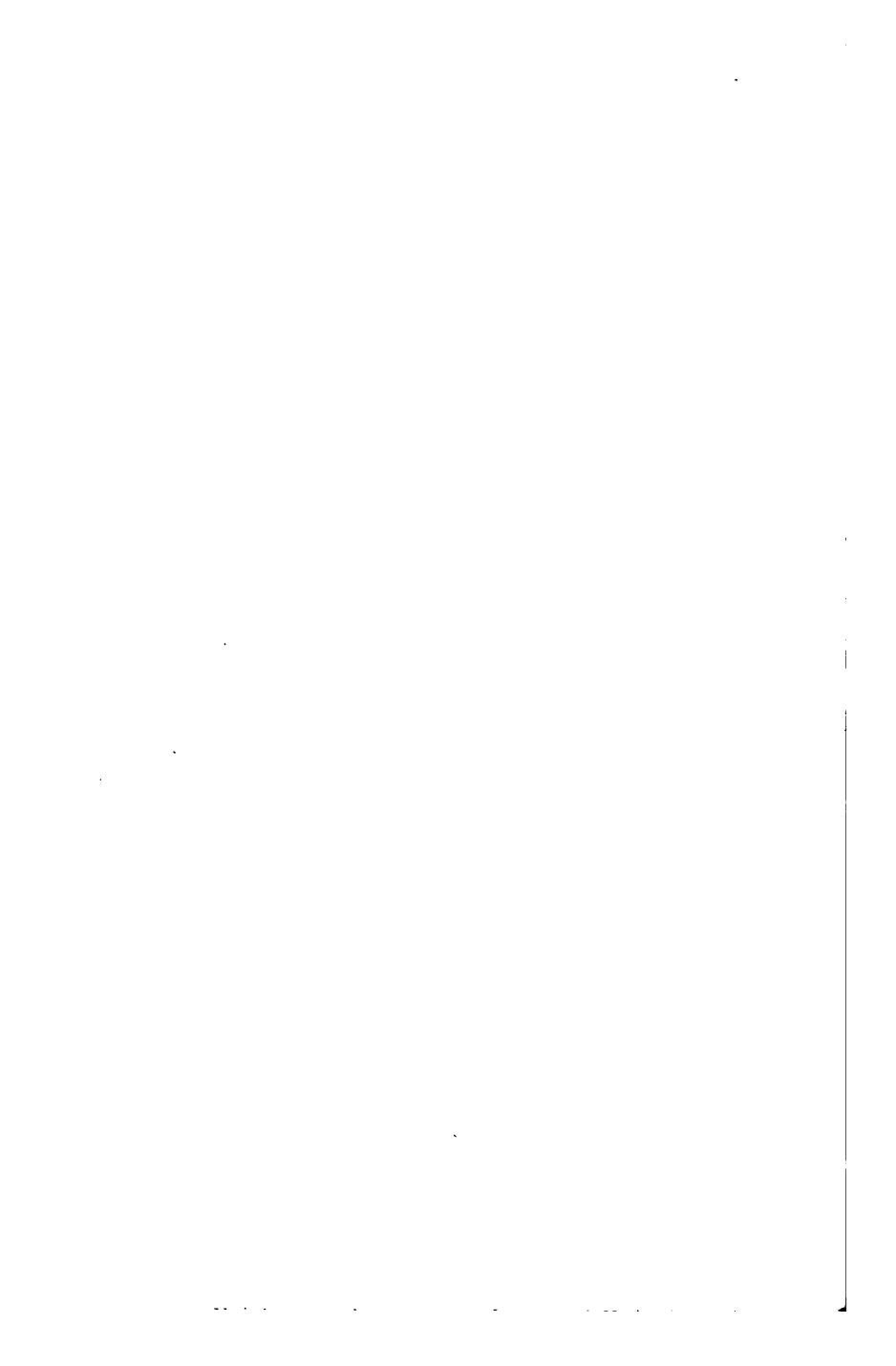
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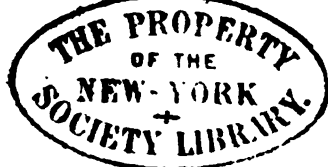
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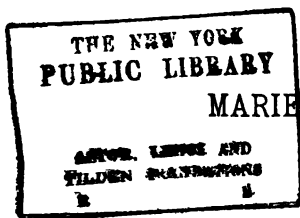


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Mathias

ELIZABETH.



TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN



OF

MARIE NATHUSIUS.

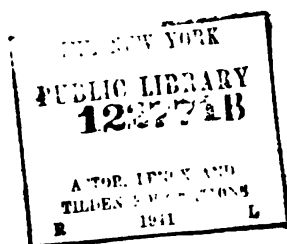
BY

MRS. M. A. SHRYOCK.

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F

So many novels and tales have been translated from the German that one more may possibly be endured by the patient reader ; particularly as the story of "Elizabeth" differs so greatly from the usual run, treating, as it does, from a Christian standpoint, the important subject of "Incompatibility in married life—what the world *thinks* and what the BIBLE *says* about Divorce."

A free translation, much condensed, has been aimed at, without omitting or altering any of the views of the gifted author.

THE TRANSLATOR.

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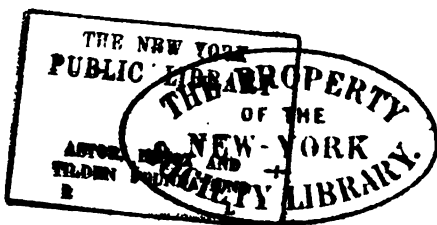
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ELIZABETH.

CHAPTER I.

"I DO not see why I should marry," exclaimed Charles von Budmar, irritably, as he paced restlessly up and down the apartment. "Why should I marry, Fritz?" he reiterated, pausing abruptly in front of his brother, who meanwhile lazily beat a tattoo upon the arm of the sofa upon which he was lounging. "Life in all conscience is burdensome enough without the restraints of matrimony."

"Your question is readily answered," replied his brother, with an amused smile; "you marry because you are engaged to be married."

"Eh! there's the rub," said Charles, grumblingly. "It is utterly incomprehensible to me how I could have committed myself. Is there no way out of it, Fritz? I will make a wretchedly unhappy Benedict," he added, with a profound sigh.

"Has something occurred to cause a change in your feelings?" inquired his brother.

"Nothing," said the unhappy young man, "It is simply that I prefer to be free from matrimonial fetters, from the restraints of family conditions. I know what will be expected of me, Fritz, after the

affair comes off. For some time I have inwardly chafed, and at last I have resolved to speak out. This morning, as usual, I called upon our neighbors, when *Madame*, with a significant gesture of the hand, mysteriously signalled me to step aside, whispering in my ear as she did so, 'To-morrow is Charlotte's birth-day. I knew that you would wish me to apprise you of it.' Now, what care I when her birth-day comes?"

"A matter of indifference to you that your betrothed was ever born!" returned his brother with a provoking smile.

"As a matter of course," continued Charles, "I am expected to present her with something: accordingly, to-day and to-morrow I shall have to rack my brains to find out what it shall be."

"Why not select some trifle that will not involve any such profound mental strain?" laughingly suggested his brother.

"That might answer," returned Charles reflectively; "but Fritz," he added, "I am so annoyed, and so nervous over it, that it is simply impossible for me to think. The question however resolves itself into this; shall the gift be ornamental or useful? I am principled against the former, yet confess that I feel *somewhat* sensitive about the comments of the guests who will dine with them to-morrow. My gift doubtless will be the chief subject of discussion among the ladies as they sip their coffee. The fair judges will then pronounce their verdict upon the donor's character, sentimental or practi-

cal, generous or parsimonious, as the case may be. The long and the short of it is that a decision must be reached, and I have not the most vague idea what to choose: to-morrow will come and find me as undecided as I am to-day. Fritz," he continued petulantly, "from the hour of my betrothal I have not enjoyed a tranquil moment. I have but one definite thought, and that is how to undo what in my egregious folly I have done."

"This disquiet will subside with your marriage," responded Fritz encouragingly.

"No, it will not;" rejoined Charles with decision. "Ever increasing demands will be made upon me. *Madame* is constantly quoting the dear deceased, his admirable qualities, her happy married life. I feel myself already at a discount: my future outlook is a gloomy one. I can not play the rôle of the happy Benedict," he ended with a profound sigh, "my nerves quiver at the very thought."

"You expect to marry the daughter, not the mother," said his brother gravely; "and a sweeter and a more artless girl you will not be likely to find if you search the world over."

"I grant you that she is a very paragon of woman-kind," responded Charles irritably; "for my part I do not pretend to understand the sex. Even you Fritz, with all your chivalry, must admit that they are enigmatical at least."

His brother could not repress a smile at this outburst, but recovering himself quickly he said, "Explain what you mean by this."

"Well, for example," continued Charles, "yesterday, as I told you, I called upon our neighbors, and in the course of conversation I introduced some of my business projects. For the space of two hours I discoursed about the estate, my new plans for the cultivation of the fallow land, the raising of food for the cattle, the erection of new out-buildings, and the adding to the live stock. The ladies fully concurred with my views. You are smiling, Fritz," he interjected, "you doubt whether I will be able to accomplish all that I contemplate doing."

"I confess that I can not see how you will do it, but I do know full well that both Charlotte and her mother possess far more practical knowledge of agriculture than I do. But this, however, is only preliminary—come to your grievance."

"During the progress of this practical conversation," continued Charles, "Charlotte was busily knitting, I winding the thread, discharging this duty as I would any other imposed upon me. Twilight came on, and my mother-in-law-elect left us alone, ostensibly to attend to some household duty. Charlotte at once laid aside her work and instinctively we both stepped to the open window. We stood silent for a few moments, for I was in a contemplative mood. Imagine my amazement when my betrothed, suddenly leaning her head on my shoulder, said in a low sentimental tone, 'Look Charles, how brightly the moon shines, how gloriously it soars above those stately

old oaks.' Fancy how I felt the while—I was struck dumb, conscious only of the absurdity of the situation. Blankly I gazed upon the miserable orb, wondering when the sentimental pose would come to an end.

"Suddenly the door opened and the worthy *Madame* entered, taking her stand upon my other side; when both ladies, to my further dismay, for they misinterpreted my silence, began some nonsensical rhapsody to the miserable source of my annoyance. I was compelled to listen to the very end. *Madame* could not suffer this opportunity to pass without a eulogy upon the dear deceased, their unity of sentiment, their oneness of soul, his sympathetic nature, and all that—just think, Fritz!

"At the close of her twaddle I took a hurried leave, and I assure you that I did not feel safe until I reached my own door."

"Why not confide in Charlotte," returned his brother with a laugh, "and tell her that sentiment and rhapsody are your abhorrence: she is by far too considerate to inflict any annoyance upon you that she can avoid."

"Yes, she is certainly amiable," said Charles after a short pause.

"You could not possibly have made a better choice," added his brother confidently.

"She is also very sensible," appended the prospective bridegroom.

"And pretty," said Fritz.

"I feel sure that Charlotte would make almost

any other man happy," eagerly exclaimed Charles; "but temperaments are so different. Fritz, you are of a sentimental turn," he urged hopefully.

"I beg of you not to misunderstand me, Charles," said his brother, with emphasis. "I would gladly welcome Charlotte as a sister, but further than that my preference does not extend."

"I most sincerely wish it did," groaned the now thoroughly discouraged young man. "I know not what will become of the poor girl—it will be a hard blow for her, but there is no alternative; the engagement must be broken, I have not the sympathetic nature of the dear deceased."

"You are making a mountain of a mole hill," said Fritz, thoroughly disgusted with his brother's egotism.

"Wait until you have had my experience," he rejoined fretfully. "No Fritz, these finely strung sensitive souls are not to my taste. I should always be in hot water."

"You look at the subject from a purely selfish standpoint. Marriage is a school."

"I grant you," interposed Charles hastily, "marriage is a school from which may heaven forbid my entering as a pupil!"

"You are too much of an egotist to comprehend me," returned Fritz. "In my opinion Charlotte is only of too amiable, of too dependent a nature. The one I marry must have a will of her own."

For quite a while they sat in silence. Fritz was irritated by his brother's unmanly complaint, Charles

filled with his personal grievance. The younger brother felt actually the situation, and after mature reflection decided that Charlotte ought to be told without delay of the singular resolve of her fickle *fiancé*. He felt confident that she would at once release him: her amiability, he knew, was equalled only by her magnanimity. That it would be a severe blow for her he did not doubt; for not only did she love him, but the prospect of being the wife of Charles von Budmar was no trifling consideration. Her mother was an officer's widow in moderate circumstances, and although the Budmarschen estate was not large, her social position would be an enviable one. Fritz had no sympathy with the gross selfishness that could thus coolly canvass matters which were of so vital importance to another.

By the death of old Herr von Budmar, which had taken place one year ago, Charles as the elder son inherited the patrimonial estate which for centuries had belonged to the Budmar family. The estate lay just outside the walls of the small provincial town of Woltheim. The family had always occupied a high position among the neighboring gentry, the members of which were cultivated and refined. They were unpretentious, and made scarcely more display in their manner of living than did the bourgeois of the adjacent towns. For the past ten years the family had led an isolated life, the mother having been long dead, and the father for many years an invalid.

The management of the estate had therefore been entrusted, to the elder son, whose mind was thoroughly absorbed in agricultural studies and pursuits, which had isolated him from society and had gradually led him to take but little interest outside of his own narrow world.

The younger son, Fritz, was an officer of cuirassiers in the neighboring garrison town of Braunschweig. A sister, much younger than either, was for the present under the care of an aunt who resided in Schlesien. After the death of the old proprietor, it was thought advisable that Charles should marry; and although averse to matrimony, he came after due consideration to the prudent conclusion that a wife would relieve him from the petty annoyance of household cares. Near by the Budmar estate dwelt Frau von Lindeman and her daughter Charlotte, the latter a pretty and amiable girl, completely under the influence of her strong-minded mother. The shrewd calculating woman managed strategically to detain not unfrequently her eligible neighbor in the practical discourses that his soul loved, as he passed by her pleasant summer house upon his way to and from his outlying fields. The clever woman soon managed to overcome the young man's suspicious timidity, so that after a time he took great pleasure in talking about his agricultural pursuits and projects with the sagacious Frau who took so lively an interest in affairs which were all-engrossing to the shy, reticent man. Having thoroughly posted

herself, it was familiar ground to her, and she could talk glibly upon the cultivation of the soil, the raising of grass and clover, irrigation, drainage, and the thousand et ceteras of husbandry, and could quote pages from "Edlen," the authority of all others most prized by Charles von Budmar.

Acquaintance gradually ripened into friendship. The astute woman had an eye to the future, and indulged in many an inward speculation of what might be. A betrothal was the natural sequence, in which the clever Frau played the principal rôle. Immediately after the betrothal, the good woman discoursed with her prospective son-in-law of settlements, and arrangements for the wedding, which she was resolved should take place without delay. The young man soon became restive; the pictures of married life, as depicted by Frau von Lindeman, were not enticing to him; accordingly he made up his mind that he would withdraw from his entanglement. Therefore, on the occasion upon which our story opens, he informed his brother at the close of their conversation that after mature reflection he had arrived at the irrevocable conclusion not to marry, but at the same time strongly advised Fritz to do so. Happy in his resolve to abdicate, he promised that if his younger brother would consent to his proposal, he would pledge himself to make up any deficiency in the household economy which the young lieutenant's pay would not cover. Fritz, although provoked at his brother's insistance, was conscious at the same time of a thrill of joy as

he contemplated the possibility of marrying so much sooner than he had dared to hope. The object of his love would bring him no dowry, therefore he had thought it hitherto the wiser course to conceal his sentiments; but now, all obstacles being removed, he frankly confessed to his brother that his heart had long chosen the one whom he hoped to make his bride, and that, if his decision not to marry was irrevocable, he would gladly enter the school which his brother was so eager to shun.

CHAPTER II.

UPON the evening of the same day on which the conversation related in the preceding chapter had taken place, Fritz von Budmar sat in Frau Lindeman's pleasant arbor, and communicated to Charlotte and her mother the singular resolve of his eccentric brother.

He was not disappointed in his estimate of the young girl's character. She sat motionless for a moment; then, without one word of protest, released her recreant lover from his engagement, adding, as she rested her clasped hands upon her lap, and gazed in his face with an appealing look, that she was not altogether unprepared for the announcement—that for some time she had been tormented by doubts regarding his feelings toward her. Her pride shrank sensitively from these disclosures, but, soon regaining her self-control, she strove to tranquilize her mother. The disappointed Frau poured forth many a plaint and protest over the sudden collapse of the aerial castle which she had been so long and with such painstaking skill erecting.

The young man awaited patiently the cessation of the storm, then assured the ladies of his brother's and of his own continued esteem and affection.

Charlotte could no longer restrain her emotion;

she felt the tears of mortification rising, and pressed her handkerchief against her eyes.

Frau von Lindeman now assured the young man that although she considered his brother's conduct inexcusable, she felt disinterestedly sorry that he had thrown away his one chance for happiness.

"Men are of such varied temperaments," said Fritz deprecatingly.

"They are all alike in one respect at least," returned Frau Lindeman, with asperity, "they are egotists, one and all."

The disagreeable conversation ended, the young man hurriedly bade adieu. In a very short time he had reached his destined goal.

A magnificent forest of oaks bounded the limits of the little village. Beneath the first gigantic tree was the Cottage of the Oberförster Braumann. He had been for many years a comrade in arms of the old Herr von Budmar, and was upon terms of intimacy with the family. His wife and his niece Marie comprised the small household. Herr Braumann was a moral, upright man, but hasty of speech and rough in manner. His wife, on the contrary, was a gentle, pious woman, who, as her husband was wont to say, knew who was master in the house. His niece, a roguish maiden, was too restive, the old man asserted, ever to be kept in check, and would prove a thorn in the side to some unlucky wight. Marie was too high-spirited to present arms to the tyrannical old soldier.

When the young officer reached the Oberförster's

cottage, twilight had deepened, the stars shone brightly in the deep blue sky, all nature seemed hushed to rest. With light elastic step he passed through the gate and received a cordial welcome from the hounds, who sprang fawningly upon him, then bounded back to the house. In the open doorway stood the slender Marie, a lovely picture. "The delicate coloring of her face seemed to gather vividness" as seen in the dusky light. Her eyes were large and luminous; she was dressed in white, and over the dark brown curls was carelessly knotted a light red kerchief. The young officer had a few moments' space for observation. His heart throbbed rapidly as he gazed upon the lovely face of the maiden, who upon her part gave not the slightest indication that she was aware of his approach, and as he advanced, ran playing with the hounds to the other side of the house.

Fritz having anticipated a far different reception, halted a few moments to regain his self-possession. He was able, however, to account for the change in her demeanor. He had offended her yesterday by criticising her conduct, when, in the exuberance of child-like merriment, she had mimicked to the life the old Magister Loci, who having accompanied her uncle to the morning's hunt, had returned to dinner, and being somewhat of a gourmand, had despatched the wild duck, of which he was extravagantly fond, with marvelous and gluttonous celerity.

The young officer entered the hall and paused

upon the threshold of the familiar room. He found the Oberförsterin seated by the open window.

"Will I disturb you if I come in?" he asked.

"Certainly not," she responded, as with a courteous gesture she indicated a place by her side. For a while they talked, until Marie's entrance interrupted their conversation.

As her aunt rose to procure a light, the young girl, with an air of embarrassment, hurried to the window.

Fritz quickly advanced to her side. "Did you not see me, Marie, when I came into the garden?" he gravely inquired. As she did not answer, he continued, "To-morrow I return to Braunhausen, and I will trouble you no more." As she still remained mute, the young officer hastily seized his cap and was about leaving the room.

"Forgive me," she cried impulsively. "I promise you that I will not act so childishly again." Fritz returned, and clasping her hand in both of his, looked long and lovingly in her sweet face, which perceptibly brightened, although the tears still hung heavy upon the dark eye-lashes.

And now the sonorous voice of the old Oberförster was heard. He had just returned from a short journey.

"You here, my dear Fritz?" he exclaimed in his heartiest tone, for the young man was a great favorite of his. "You must sit down and have a smoke with me."

"Run, my girl," he cried authoritatively to his

niece, "bring us the pipes." After obeying his command, Marie was about leaving the room.

"Matches !" called her uncle, angrily, irritated by her forgetfulness. The young girl stood submissively before the old man until his pipe was alight, then with an imperative gesture he indicated that she should serve his guest. The officer would not permit her to perform so menial a service, and springing to his feet, with a low bow took the lighted taper from her hand. At this gallantry the old man grumbled aloud, and his niece hastened from the storm that she saw was impending.

Fritz, with a quick throbbing heart, felt that the time had come for the introduction of the subject which had seemed so practicable as he had walked thitherward—the "far off unheeding" stars his only auditors. Summoning his self-control, he plunged headlong into the affair ; told of Charles' singular resolve, of his release from his betrothal, and of his brother's desire that she should marry; lastly, of the generous offer he had made him. The old man growled lustily over this folly. From topic to topic Fritz glided easily and naturally until with less embarrassment than the young man had thought possible, asked the Oberförster for the hand of his niece, Marie.

Herr Braumann could scarcely believe his ears.

"She is not the wife for you," he cried impulsively, "you are too easy, too indulgent for her."

Fritz permitted the old man to talk, but when he had ended, quietly but warmly urged his suit.

The conference ended with the assurance from Herr Braumann that to no one would he rather give the hand of his niece than to Fritz von Budmar, the son of his old comrade. When the happy suitor suggested that Marie be consulted, the old soldier curtly informed him that in their family it was not customary to defer to the inclination of its daughters. "I consider," he added, "that I have a right as her natural guardian to accept or to reject a candidate for her hand. But if you insist, she shall be called and told of the happiness in store for her."

Aunt and niece were accordingly summoned, and the old man began his speech. He was not so fluent as usual, and stammered somewhat as the roguish girl stood demurely before him. What if his self-opinionated niece would not choose to conform to the family custom, and would refuse to receive a husband on his approval! With a profound sigh of relief the Oberförster saw the willful girl lay her hand lovingly into that of the young cuirassier. Congratulatory salutations were exchanged, and soon Fritz von Budmar was upon his return to Woltheim, his heart filled with bright anticipations of the future.

CHAPTER III.

BRIGHT, gloriously bright, rose the sun upon the morning of the twelfth of May, in the year of our Lord 1805. The wood was redolent with fragrance, blossoms unfolded their dainty petals, the auricula gleamed in velvet sheen, and from out the fresh, dewy mead peered hundreds of iridescent eyes, which sparkled and glowed amid the verdure like blazing gems.

A little gate in the garden wall, which enclosed the Budmar estate, opened into a meadow green and broad, through which a crystal brook, overshadowed by great elms, wound its tortuous way. For more than a mile the streamlet girdled the mead, thence with a devious course it turned and the wide expanse was hedged in by a ridge of dark green firs. From out this little gate, along the path which led to the height, Fritz and Marie sauntered, upon the morning of their wedding day, beginning their new life with spring and sunshine and gladness. From its summit they could see the towers of Braunhausen, the garrison-town in which the young officer was quartered. From this height the youthful pair could look down also upon their future home, and upon the new life which lay so broad and rich before them. So isolated a ramble as this they had not enjoyed since their betrothal.

The old Oberförster highly disapproved of such vagrant roving; moreover, it was not the mode. But, for to-day, the obstinate old man was overruled by the privileged cousin and friend of the family, who assured him that the bride who took an active part in the preparations for her own wedding, upon her wedding day, would have a life beset with care.

Upon the summit of this fir-crowned height, Fritz and Marie seated themselves, conversing together of past and present and future. They were not so utterly engrossed in the joy of the moment that all besides was forgotten. Their love for each other was solemnly recognized as a magnet to lead them to a nobler and a higher life.

"These words seem echoing in my soul to-day," said Marie, as she turned her sweet face toward that of her betrothed, "'I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.' These words are exemplified in my case," she added, with confidence.

"Are you certain of this?" asked Fritz with a smile.

Her expressive eyes rested upon his face with a meditative look. "Yes, Fritz," she replied; "I see a Providence in our love for each other—a significance in every event in my history. If it were not so, I would not be the happy girl that I am. Without this assurance I would be unable to comprehend why you ever loved me, nor would I have any reliance upon the continuance of your love."

"It is a problem difficult of solution," said Fritz reflectively. "Love is ever a mystery. You cannot demonstrate to my satisfaction, Marie, why you should have consented to go with me to that little cottage in Braunhausen—too small for ostentation, yet full large for the entrance of care and trouble. Neither can you reasonably tell me why you, this day, my wilful bride, bow submissively to the command, 'He shall be thy lord.'"

"No," said Marie, her lovely face full of child-like joy; "it is not clear to myself why this vow of obedience is the crowning joy of my life."

"That is the very witchery of love. One cannot unravel its mysteries if one would," said Fritz—

"And tell me how love cometh?

'Tis here—unsought—unsent.

And tell me how love goeth?

That was not Love which went."

"I believe in our love most religiously," continued the prospective bridegroom.

"It is as you say, inexplicable," returned Marie, "how hearts are drawn together; but if we realize from our own experience that two finite hearts can be thus joined, how can we doubt the equally mysterious bond that unites the heart of the infinite Father to that of his earthly children."

The young officer could not repress a smile, as he recognized in these words the pupil of the pious Oberförsterin, yet listened with a gracious and responsive interest as she talked.

"Think, Marie, what a wealth of love will be ours," said Fritz, "when we celebrate our golden wedding, should love grow from year to year, as grow it must."

"Our golden wedding!" echoed the young bride in accents of surprise.

"Yes, why not?" he continued; "this too, you can say, may be the Lord's will."

"Fifty years—the half of a century! That is a long, long time to look forward to. I shall not then be—" she paused and smiled.

"So young nor so beautiful," said the young man, laughing.

She blushed and nodded.

"Oh! that is what may be expected," he added; "but one of the compensations," continued Fritz, gravely, "in married life, is that the changes come without one's seeing them. But we must be going."

The youthful pair had promised to pay Charles a morning visit, to inspect the preparations which had been made to celebrate their nuptials.

The old gray mansion, with its escutcheon above the lofty portal, its high windows and spacious apartments, was in festal dress to-day. Flowers in lavish profusion were scattered throughout its freshly garnished rooms. Singularly enough, the good Frau Lindeman and her amiable daughter participated in these preparations, for Charles von Budmar, with his wonted eccentricity, had chosen this auspicious occasion for the renewal of good

will and courtesies with his neighbors. Utterly ignoring the past, he placed himself upon his former footing of friendship. The curt bachelor was the very personification of happiness as he busied himself in these arrangements. Economy was thrown to the winds, the servants of the house and farm were assembled, and for once "he poured forth his heart and his wine together in endless profusion." As the young pair took their departure they were heartily assured by Charles that he took more pleasure in celebrating their nuptials than had they been his own.

It was an irksome task to listen to the prosy old Magister's wedding discourse, and to receive the congratulations of such a host of relatives and friends. The happiest hour of that eventful day was when the gentle Oberförsterin placed the hand of her dearly-beloved niece into that of the young officer, and gave them her blessing.

At the close of the wedding festivities, quiet settled down upon the forest home. The old Herr missed his merry niece, although he was too obstinate to acknowledge it. Months had passed, when one morning, upon entering the living room, the Oberförster remained riveted to the threshold, completely overcome by surprise. Immediately above the old sofa there hung two full-length portraits of the handsome young pair, set in a massive golden frame—Fritz in his rich, dark uniform, and Marie, clad in her pure white bridal dress. His wife was a pleased and silent witness of his astonishment.

Turning, he saw her and struggled hard to regain his self-control; somewhat tremulously he queried, "Is this your work, *meine Frau*?"—then sinking into a chair and covering his face with his hands, he wept like a child. "This is the greatest pleasure that you could have given me," he said as soon as he could compose himself sufficiently to speak.

Year followed year, and still these portraits hung upon the wall, while the youthful pair lived on in Braunhausen, joy and sorrow coequal guests in the little house upon the side of the mountain.

CHAPTER IV.

FIVE and twenty years have hastened away with noiseless flight, and the old grey house, with its armorial bearings, is again in holiday dress. "Genial Spring, with its outgushing life, is here." It is a balmy, sunny morning in May. "The bluest and broadest of heavens is bending in silent benediction over the vernal earth." The shadowy wood is redolent with fragrance ; the sweet, clear note of the nightingale is heard by the crystal brook, and the mead, bright with the sheen of the dew, is filled as of yore with its myriad-hued company of flowers. "All nature is melting into ecstasy and song," as upon that eventful morning, five and twenty years ago.

But changes many and varied have passed upon those who then enjoyed its beauty. Strangers dwell in the Oberförsterei, its present incumbent holding but little intercourse with the Budmar family. The stately portraits no longer grace the walls of the old forest house, but now adorn the living room of the ancestral mansion. The picture in its massive frame hangs in state over the carved sofa, upon whose hospitable cushions sit two persons, who bear a striking resemblance to the figures of the young officer and his blooming bride, "only still more beautiful, as time should ever

leave us, imparting to us in his flight that beauty of the spirit which one can see only the more clearly as the bloom of youth departs, and the loveliness of wisdom and the beauty of holiness take its place." Their features had grown somewhat sharper, but one could read between the lines that a life of affection and tranquil happiness had kept their hearts fresh and young.

The gentle, gracious mistress of the Oberförsterei had meanwhile passed away, but she still lived in loving remembrance, in the home of her niece, Marie. A host of little ones had gathered around them during the passage of these five and twenty years. Not only children of their own, but two grandchildren, now laid claim to their love and care, who in turn were even more warmly cherished, were that possible, than their own had been.

The still youthful Fritz von Budmar was no longer an officer in active service, but a Rentmeister, and lived in the ancestral home. One tranquil year of unalloyed happiness he had passed with his young bride, when was ushered in "with all the pomp and circumstance of war" the disastrous campaign of 1806. The young officer was ordered to the field, and although peace was declared the following year and he returned to the garrison, the calamitous effects of the war followed him and his family. Charles, the elder brother, who had so generously proffered assistance to the young couple in their domestic economy, was so straitened in circumstances that he was scarcely

able to hold his head above water. In consequence of these unforeseen events, Fritz had been compelled to live within the narrow limits of his Lieutenant's pay. This, during the interval, proved inadequate to meet the necessary household expenditures. Pressing need knocked loudly and insistently at their door, and the unwelcome guest found entrance, and room enough and to spare in the little house upon the mountain side.

At the battle of Leipzig a shot had disabled the young officer's arm, thereby rendering him unfit for service. Accordingly, after the declaration of peace, he received the appointment of Rentmeister in his native town. The entire Budmarschen family dwelt now in the quaint old home, with its lofty windows and spacious apartments. Frau von Lindeman had long been dead, and her daughter, the gentle Charlotte, had been kindly urged to assume the position of nursery governess to the numerous Budmar children, and was a much loved and valued friend in the household. After due consideration a tutor was also engaged, it being the unanimous verdict that the additional outlay would prove in the long run a more economical plan than to educate so many lads at a Gymnasium.

Year followed year in quick succession, and the changes which time had wrought in the family of the Rentmeister passed by almost unnoticed, when suddenly in the year 1824, Woltheim was electrified by the news that the Landrath Kühneman had asked in marriage the hand of Elise Budmar, the elder daughter of the house.

Herr Kühneman was an assessor in Berlin, but at present was in Woltheim to oversee and to temporarily supply the office of Landrath, which was then vacant. He was a distinguished, cultivated and scholarly man; his parents resided in Berlin. From youth up he had been surrounded by a circle rich in all the gifts which education, culture and position have within their power to bestow. He came to Woltheim very reluctantly, and for a time his visits were confined almost entirely to the house of the Oberförster. The wife of the present incumbent was the daughter of a wealthy family, and withal an ambitious woman, who ostentatiously entertained the officers and their families from the garrison at Braunhausen, and members of the neighboring provincial gentry.

It was around the card-table at the Oberförster home that the young assessor had heard for the first, quite inadvertently, that cards were never introduced in the Budmar house. Not because the Rentmeister condemned them in toto, but that in their family, as he said, they gave the preference to a different, and in his opinion, to a better class of amusements. The subject was at the time jokingly spoken of and laughingly criticised. The æsthetic, cultivated man of society thought that from mere curiosity he would like to find out what could take the place of card playing in this exceptional household, for he himself was beginning to tire of the never-ending *divertissement*.

It was comparatively an easy task to make the

acquaintance of Fritz von Budmar, and Herr Kühneman found himself most agreeably disappointed in the man. But still more was he surprised at the family life in the old Budmar home. The children had been carefully educated, were well informed in literature, and were accomplished in fine arts and music; foreign languages, also, were both read and spoken by them. The scholarly Rentmeister had made them conversant with the best of ancient and modern literature, using the books not as text-books merely, but taking pleasure and interest himself in reading them with his family. Much to his surprise, upon further intercourse, the young Landrath was compelled to confess that Elise Budmar, the elder daughter of the house, was not only as highly accomplished as the ladies of his acquaintance in the Residence, but that she was decidedly their superior in beauty and refinement of character.

The young man did not attempt to disguise his sentiments, and the parents were soon aware of his growing preference. The mother did not feel altogether satisfied, and watched the progress of affairs with no little anxiety. "I know not why," she said upon one occasion to her husband, at the same time drawing a deep sigh, "but I feel as though I would rather not see my daughter the wife of this young man."

"Why not?," queried the father.

"In the first place," she answered, "she will be compelled to live in Berlin, and will necessarily

minge in a circle who think that culture and scholarly attainments are superior to all else. Herr Kühneman's wish is to live in Berlin, and he will accomplish this end before long."

"Do you consider that a misfortune?" said her husband, laughing.

"Well, perhaps not a misfortune; but I do consider it a great danger, particularly for one of Elise's temperament; she relies too much upon intellect and culture now. I should like," she added after a moment's pause, "to be surer of his principles."

"Herr Kühneman is a noble man, my wife; I approve of him. Although not a professed Christian, he is no disbeliever, of that I am fully convinced; he loves the truth; and if daughter Elise relies too much upon intellectual attainments, she will soon find out that intellect alone is but a slender reed to lean upon. No, I confess that I have no objection to urge against his suit. We cannot keep our children separate from the world, and we would not if we could. They must go through it alone. The Lord will lead them safely through its labyrinths; Neither I nor you can fight their battles for them. We have tried to lay a good foundation; we have planted the good seed; we will pray for the Lord's blessing and let them enter the lists. Children's minds have to be disciplined before they are able to appreciate the beauties of Shakespeare, Schiller, or Goethe—they struggle many a year before the classics are a source of pleasure to them; it is the

same with music. The young *spirit* also requires nourishment; it is our task to supply the best nutriment for mind and soul, as well as body. Left to themselves, they would choose indiscreetly. We have done our part to the very best of our ability. You, my wife, are putting your providence in the place of God's. Do not worry; give the care of your plants into the hands of the Heavenly Gardener, pray Him for the dew and sunshine of His grace, and take courage."

"Little children, little care; large children, large care," sighed the mother.

"I would leave the cares, were I you," said the hopeful Rentmeister.

"Ah! yes," she responded with a sigh, "but the mother's life is ever a life of care."

Notwithstanding, the betrothal of Elise Budmar with the Landrath Kühneman was finally consummated, and the mother's heart was glad as she looked upon the bright happy face of her daughter, and was the recipient of the affectionate respect of her new son.

That the scholarly son-in-law was not of noble birth affected the parents but little. Uncle Charles was the sole member of the family who saw any objection on that score, and the patient Charlotte was the trusted confidant of his disaffection.

"I had much rather," he grumbled, "that Elise had not married out of her own rank in life."

"Yes," responded the sympathizing confidant, "it is a great pity that she, the elder daughter of the house, should make a *mésalliance*."

This, however, was more than Charles had expected; the honor of the family was at stake. "We cannot call it a *mésalliance*," he returned, irritably. "Herr Kühneman is a man of social importance, distinguished, clever and influential."

"And of such courtly manners," added Charlotte, timidly.

"You must bear in mind, Charlotte, that things have changed since you and I were young. It is very different in these times. A man of worth and a man of affairs has the decided priority over the scion of merely noble birth. To the bourgeois, if possessed of the necessary talents, the way is opened to the very highest stations in life, even to that of Prime Minister," he added reflectively, but with the shadow of a frown the while.

"Should our Elise become a Frau Ministerin, she will grace the situation," said the gentle governess, flatteringly. "It sounds well, does it not, *Frau Ministerin Kühneman, geborne von Budmar?*"

Uncle Charles, somewhat mollified, gave a satisfied nod of approval.

The official business which had brought Herr Kühneman to Woltheim was soon ended, and he returned to the Residence, taking his wife with him.

The mother's cares did not end with the marriage of Elise. On the contrary, every rolling year brought some additional cause of disturbance. The final examination of Fritz, the eldest son, was

expected to take place shortly. This was a source of great anxiety to the mother. Meanwhile Julchen, the sixteen-year-old daughter, had formed an unfortunate attachment, and although the family succeeded in breaking it off in time, it still exerted its unpleasant influence. Then followed the grandmother's cares, while the nursery at Woltheim still sheltered several of the younger children.

In the midst of these many anxieties the twenty-five years had rolled around, and now was the silver wedding. For the time, trouble and care were cast to the winds, and the Rentmeister and his faithful wife felt as if, over a stormy sea, they had suddenly landed upon some blessed, flowery isle, where the sunshine of peace rested cloudless and lovingly over them.

There was scarcely room for the many guests who were bidden to the festival, even in the spacious mansion. The old nursery was occupied by the Frau *Regierungsräthin* Kühneman with her two children; her husband, the reserved, scholarly man, was no restraint upon the mirth of the household; on the contrary, he vied with the younger lads in all their sports and merrymaking. Wilhelm, the eldest of the youths, had now entered upon his twenty-third year; Adolf, twenty-one years old, was still a student; Max, a slender cadet of seventeen, while Julchen and her younger sister Marie were the devoted aunts to Elise's children; the younger son was still under the care of the

house-tutor. In addition to their immediate family, there was Frau Oberst von Reisenhagen, the only sister of the brothers von Budmar, with her two children. She had married many years later in life than the Rentmeister, and her daughter Emilie was only two years the elder of her brother's grandchild, the much-admired, dearly-beloved Elizabeth.

Herr von Schulz, the present incumbent of the Oberförsterei, was also a guest, and willingly would have been accounted one of the family, for Julchen's blue eyes had taken his heart captive. The young girl was not displeased with his admiration, and her parents not only had no objection to receive him as their son-in-law, but it was the dearest wish of the mother's heart that such might be the case. Herr Schulz was a superior man, upright and God-fearing; and moreover the mother longed to see her dear daughter safe within the shelter of the dearly loved old Oberförster home.

Upon the morning of the festival, uncle Charles sought out Charlotte to enjoy his customary hour's chat. This had been his invariable and indispensable habit for many years. He was annoyed by the noise and bustle in the house; it had lasted too long for the old man. The beautiful nonsense, as he grumblingly told Charlotte, was interminable. Music and dancing had no charms for him, and he irritably added: *that*, among the young people, was all that was thought of now-a-days. "But the contract is concluded," he began. "Julchen is to be

married to the Oberförster, and for my part I am glad of it; for I do think, Charlotte, that it is better by half that a young girl should marry."

He said this quite ingenuously, and Charlotte received it as he meant it.

"It is better," she replied briefly, although the words were accompanied with a sigh, as thoughts of the past overcame her. "And it is a most suitable match," she added approvingly.

"You have no idea what a relief it is to me when one of our many children is provided for."

"Certainly, certainly," was the assuring reply.

"Yes, certainly," he repeated with emphasis, "it is ever taking out of the purse and putting nothing in; and I tell you, Charlotte, this is going to be a heavy year on me. First will come Julchen's *trousseau*, then Max will need an officer's equipment. Of course the lad had to enter the cavalry. I do not blame him, it would be my preference; but the plague of it is that it costs just about as much again as if he had gone into the infantry."

"All needs will be provided for, Herr von Budmar," replied Charlotte, encouragingly, "God's richest blessing rests upon your stewardship."

"Yes," responded the old man with conviction, "and I hope that our children may live to do honor to their name."

"And what splendid children they all are!"

"Yes, pretty well brought up, considering all things. They might be more economical than

they are, but I must confess that brother Fritz is no example himself in domestic economy. My ideas about improving the estate I have long given up. I am no nearer to the accomplishment of my purpose than I was thirty years ago. I cannot convince Fritz of its necessity. If I only could do as I would! It is provoking—for you see, Charlotte, I am distracted figuring how to gather together money to meet these ever-recurring emergencies; I have neither heart nor thought to give to anything else. But I hope before long that I may be able to carry out my plans. When Wilhelm is an assessor, Adolf out of the way, Max an officer, and Julchen no longer on my pocket, there will come a leisure hour, and I will have time to breathe. I expect to leave to Wilhelm a far different estate from that I entered upon. I hope that he may be Landrath, and a right worthy representative of the Budmar family he will be.”

“Splendid, splendid” rejoined Charlotte, assuringly, and soon they were both absorbed in husbandry with its thousand details and in forming impractical plans for the future. Charles discoursed, as of yore, upon the cultivation of the soil, the raising of food for the cattle, the erection of barns and stables for choice stock. Charlotte reminded him of Edlen’s suggestions, and was rather taken aback when he somewhat querulously informed her that Edlen was no longer authority upon agriculture. Strengthened by this confidential *tête-à-tête*, the old uncle mingled again in the excitement

below stairs. And what a holiday it was! Not only did all Nature rejoice with them in her bright, blue, sunny sky, verdant earth and manifold flowers, but the dove of peace and love brooded undisturbed over the hearts of the united family.

"Brother," said the Rentmeister, "you do not know what a happy occasion a silver wedding is—but I would not make you feel badly."

"No, no, you cannot make me feel badly," he replied, with a smile, although his smile looked singularly grim. "No, Fritz," he repeated, "I thank God that He has brought us thus far on our journey. I would far rather rejoice with you upon this your silver wedding day than if it was my own. I think and hope that we have left all money troubles behind us."

"Do not lay that flattering unction to your soul," replied Fritz, "for when we are through with the children, then will come the grandchildren."

"The grandchildren!" echoed Charles in dismay.

"Yes, naturally, the grandchildren."

"What have we to do with that? The parents may care for them. I tell you once for all, Fritz"—

At this moment the little Elizabeth came dancing toward them. Shaking her bright, brown curls the while, she cried gleefully, "We are going to hunt plover-eggs to-morrow, are we not, Uncle Charles?"

"Yes, Lieschen, you and I will hunt them," he said, as he took the lovely child in his arms and pressed her closely to his heart.

"But," she continued, "you will have to get me a little wagon, Uncle, and two goats to draw it, then I will take you a drive."

"But I have neither goats nor wagon," replied her uncle.

"Then you must buy them for me," replied the wise Lieschen.

"Well, well, we will think about it when you come again."

"But I am never going away," insisted the child, "I intend to live here with Grandmamma, and every day you and I will hunt plover-eggs."

"You can stay all summer," said the old man, quite charmed. "Fritz," said he, turning to his brother, "I really believe the child would stay with us."

"Why not?" returned the Rentmeister, then with assumed gravity, he added, "but we will not take that burden upon us. Her parents can care for her. We have enough to do to provide for our own children. Should we be indiscreet enough to do this, we need never expect to come upon a green twig."

"But she is such a little one," said Charles, not appreciating the joke, "we surely will be able to provide for her."

"Yes," replied Fritz, "she is a little one, but her wants are not little. She asks, at four years of age, for a wagon and two goats."

"That is not asking for the earth," said the Uncle testily. "Yes, Lieschen," said the old man

turning to the child, "You shall stay here, and you shall have your wagon and your goats too."

The child danced merrily away.

"Well, brother, I have no objection. I see that you have the heart of a grandmother, and that you have forgotten how the younger generation should be trained."

"The heart of a grandmother," repeated the silver bride, as she advanced toward them. She had heard the words and thought that they were speaking of her. "One cannot help caring for this dear child; not one of our own was ever as beautiful or as lovable as she."

"You are partial, my dear wife, because she resembles you," said her husband.

"Resembles *me*?" repeated Frau Budmar, "not so. I was never so impetuous nor so lovely as this child."

"*You* were brought up differently; *you* were taught to control your temper and to defer to the wishes of others."

Little Lieschen came again and in her joy threw her arms around her grandmother's neck, saying with fervor, "Grandmamma, I love you *so* much." Then turning to her grandfather, she exclaimed, "and I love you too, and Uncle Charles, and I love the whole world, and I love the chair and I love the table," then with dancing feet ran merrily away.

"You dear, dear child," said the silver bride, quite charmed. "Yes, Fritz," she said, turning

to the still youthful-looking groom, as they seated themselves upon the sofa, "I would not wish to undertake the care of all of my grandchildren; but you *must* indulge me in this, or better still, you must share my care of Elizabeth. It seems as though she had been given to us to protect. The child will not be much trouble. A heart so full of love must be happy and must make others happy also."

"That is not by any means certain," said the grandfather laughing; "a child that can take a chair and table to her heart can take in the whole world."

"Lieschen is so tender-hearted, so sensitive, she will be easily influenced for good or ill."

"But the little maid has a will of her own, notwithstanding her loving disposition."

The attention of the grandparents was now directed towards the child, who was at the time engaged in carrying on an animated conversation with Emilie von Reisenhagen.

"Do, Emilie, let me take your garden-hat," pleaded Lieschen, beseechingly.

"Where is your own?" asked her cousin.

"I do not know," replied the child, "let me take yours. Uncle Charles is coming directly to show me a plover's nest."

"You are such a careless girl," returned Emilie, with the wisdom of age, "that I will not lend you my hat."

"Oh! do, do, Emilie: I cannot find mine."

"No," was the decided answer, "should I give you mine I would have none for myself."

"You can get mine, it is in the garden. And I will take yours."

"No," said Emilie again, "you are so careless that you will throw my hat away, as you have done your own."

One could easily read that there was a tempest in a teapot in little Lieschen's sweet face. Self will and anger flashed from her eyes. She repeated once again, "Uncle is going to take me out, and I *will* have your hat."

"No, no, no," reiterated Emilie.

"You stupid old thing you," cried Lieschen, then, presto! a box on the ear. A fierce thrust of the little arm followed so quickly that the astonished Emilie lost her balance and fell screaming to the ground.

The grandmother had wished to stop the beginning of the strife, but her husband had restrained her and awaited with interest the result. "There we have it," he said. "No, Marie, I agree with you, such a hot-head you never were. I do not blame you in wishing to take your granddaughter in charge."

The screeching Emilie drew around her a crowd of sympathizers. Then followed discipline, but owing to its being a holiday the punishment was milder than it otherwise would and should have been. This scene being over, the festival proceeded undisturbed and closed with grateful thanks to the Giver of all good.

CHAPTER V.

FIFTEEN years have passed since the silver wedding. "The lapse of intervening years, and the accompanying vicissitudes inevitably have wrought important changes," not only in the world at large, but also in the dear ancestral home. It is no longer the same as regards its interior life. The children have all flown from the sheltering nest and are widely scattered. The parents are alone; varied experiences have been theirs: births and deaths, each in their turn, have brought joy and sorrow to the widespread family circle. The grandparents rejoiced and sorrowed with their children, but as those afar from the scene of action. Their responsibility seemed over, and with childlike faith they recognized that all these things came alike from the hands of God, their loving Father. To the venerable pair joy and sorrow were but relative terms. Their time of peace had come; they thanked God with grateful hearts that their children, although widely separated from them, were safe as when sheltered by their loving care, safe in the keeping of God Himself.

It was a gloomy day in November; the East was one grey mass of clouds; the wind, laden with rain and snow, dashed against the casement; twilight had deepened, although it was scarcely four o'clock.

Frau Kühneman stood by the window gazing meditatively out upon the dark grey sky, upon the shadowy houses opposite, upon the soiled, snow-trodden streets. She was a handsome, stately woman; time had wrought but little change in our old friend Elise. Her dark, brown hair was as glossy and bright, her face as fair and fresh, only her features had become more strongly defined, and her slender figure more matronly than of yore. Restlessly she turned from the window and seated herself at her writing-desk, upon which lay an unfinished letter and an open Bible. She had been writing and reading. She sighed profoundly as she read. Her mind was evidently too disturbed to enable her to concentrate her thoughts upon the words of Holy Writ. Her conscience reproached her that she had neglected her early morning devotions, "before the cares and distractions of the day laid claim to her attention." Faithfully had the girl Elise promised her mother that she would never permit any ordinary hindrance to interfere with this duty. Her neglect accordingly made her heart heavy. Vainly she strove to excuse herself. A mother's and a housewife's cares are so many and so varied, she argued; they also are duties and cannot be neglected; in many instances they are of paramount importance and their observance is as truly God's service as the reading of His Word. But her excuses did not quiet the reproaches of her awakened conscience; "her day had been begun without the blessing which puts all the confusion

of the day in order." She had forgotten that it is when "to-morrow's burden is added to the burden of to-day, that the weight is more than one can bear." Taking up her pen she wrote still further, "It is not always so with me. Sometimes I cannot but think that it is much more difficult to be a Christian amid the distractions of a town life than in the seclusion of a country home, such as yours, dear Julchen. You are queen over your little kingdom, but I am not. Your husband's position is irresponsible; he is a law unto himself. My husband, on the contrary, is obliged to take the wishes of his colleagues into consideration. Both duty and personal interest compel him to defer to their opinions, and require him also to maintain friendly intercourse with them and with their families. These complications bring us more into society than either of us desires, and from this mesh hang hundreds of slender threads, drawing the net closer and ever closer around us. Elizabeth has been invited to her first ball, and if we would not give offence, we must permit her to go. My husband cannot ignore his position. For Elizabeth's sake I would gladly decline the invitation, but I do not dare to insist too strenuously upon her remaining at home. Some consideration is due also to the opinions and prejudices of my husband's family. You have no conception what a trouble it is to me, the influence which the two aunts exert over the children, particularly over Elizabeth. They love the child, she is the very pride and joy of their other-

wise solitary lives. I would not be ungrateful, and frankly confess that they have spared neither time nor expense upon her education. By so doing they have contributed no little to our comfort and easement. You may think it is unnecessary for a young girl to be so accomplished, but we dare not wholly ignore the requirements of the day. It is due to my children, and I am anxious to do all that lies within my power, to qualify them for the station in life in which God has seen fit to place them. I confess that to-day both head and heart are in a tumult of conflicting emotions. When I think of my youth, of our old home-life, in what simplicity and innocence we were nurtured, I comprehend for the first time how happy a woman our mother was. Do not imagine that I mean to convey the slightest reproach to my husband; not so, he is a good man; but his engagements are necessarily such that he has no time for family life, and when he has a leisure hour, he is not always in the mood to be troubled with the children. Household expenditure is also a great annoyance to me. I am required constantly to be on the *qui vive* contriving and planning in order to have all things in keeping with my husband's position. The housekeeping of one who has a station to support, without the requisite wherewithal, is extremely difficult, I assure you. You cannot estimate what this means to me."

Here the writer was interrupted—a carriage rolled up to the door, the bell rang, and the maid

had barely announced visitors, when two ladies followed her into the room.

"Here we are, dear Elise," said the elderly lady, "we thought we would spend the twilight hour with you."

The *Geheimeräthin* greeted with warmth her aunt Reisenhagen—for it was she—and her daughter Emilie, who thus familiarly entered the living room. Her husband, the General, had lately been removed to Berlin. Elise was delighted to have them so near, and fervently hoped that her kind Christian aunt would be of assistance to her as a guide through the labyrinthine distractions of town life. At the same time she fully recognized that their residence in the same city would multiply the complications of her family duties. She knew that her aunt would not interfere with the claims of her social requirements; yet Cousin Emilie, with her set mouth and firm will, she had reason to fear, would be a perpetual source of reproach to her. *Her* presence was not calculated to bring about a desirable adjustment of affairs for the perplexed housewife.

"Where is Elizabeth?" inquired Emilie somewhat peremptorily.

"This is her English hour," replied Elise, briefly.

"Elizabeth was confirmed last Easter, was she not? I thought after that event all studies were to be given up," said Emilie laughingly.

"I would it were so," returned the mother, with

a sigh, "these dreadfully expensive studies! but Elizabeth would soon be out of practice did she give up this opportunity for speaking English."

"Why does she study so indefatigably?" inquired the aunt ingenuously.

"Because it is indispensable to the requirements of her position," Elise returned quickly.

Emilie would have replied, but her mother interposed and diverted the conversation into another and less dangerous channel. She spoke at some length upon her new domestic arrangements, and closed by saying that they were now fully settled, and that she hoped soon, and often, to have the pleasure of entertaining her niece and her family, Emilie kindly seconded the wishes of her mother, and added with warmth that she was delighted at being so near her cousin, and that she hoped they would see each other frequently, and that the two families would be as social as their near relationship warranted.

Frau Kühneman, affected by their warmth of manner, and unnerved and excited by the events and distractions of the day, longed to unburden herself to her kind aunt as she had done to her sister in her letter, when the door bell again rang and prevented her from doing so.

The two sisters of the Geheimerath Kühneman, Aunts Paula and Wina, as they were familiarly called in their brother's household, entered the room at this inopportune juncture. Frau Kühneman introduced her sisters-in-law to her Aunt

Reisenhagen. Emilie had already made their acquaintance during a long summer sojourn in Woltheim. It was plainly evident that upon both sides, insuperable obstacles stood in the way of their ever becoming congenial friends. The two elderly aunts were invariably polite and ceremonious, and therefore did not notice the coolness of Emilie's manner. Moreover, they were upon this occasion too excited and engrossed in their own affairs to be impressed with the seriousness of the situation.

"Dear Elise," began Aunt Wina excitedly, "we have come purposely to talk over the preparations for Elizabeth's *toilette*, fearing you might possibly find yourself somewhat embarrassed through this sudden invitation, we beg of you to allow us to assist you."

"It has not yet been decided whether we will accept," responded the mother, attempting to ward off the discussion which she saw to her consternation was impending.

"I pray you," continued Wina, hastily, "do not be prudish or indulge in any absurd whims *this* time. What will become of Elizabeth should you thus always efface yourself and her? You have kept her a child long enough. All of our circle expect that she will make her *début* in the world this winter."

"In the world," echoed her sister-in-law, with a sigh.

"I use the customary expression. I am aware

that you do not live in the world. We, ourselves, would not wish to see our lovely blooming Elizabeth plunged in a vortex of gayety, which course would be injurious to the dear child spiritually and physically; but to go now and again to a family ball, what possible harm can that do her?"

"One must not draw the reins too tightly," interposed Aunt Paula, impressively. "A young girl will have her pleasures, and our Elizabeth is so fond of dancing!"

"The dear, innocent child," interjected Aunt Wina, "let her enjoy herself while she can."

"She might do that without going to a ball," returned Emilie derisively.

"Tastes differ," continued Wina, curtly, "but I do not intend to enter upon a discussion," she continued, with added sharpness in her tone. "I would not decide for others; let each one follow his own inclination."

"Discussion is altogether unnecessary. The natural inclination of most young girls is to enjoy themselves," returned Emilie. "I, for my part, have to thank my training that balls are not included within the circle of my enjoyments."

Wina's face crimsoned with anger. Emilie's mother gave her an admonishing look, and Elise entered the breach. "Let be, dear Emilie; you and my sisters will never come to an agreement. *We* understand each other, and that is enough. The dear aunts," she continued, jestingly, "have come to advise; convinced, I cannot be." She

then added gravely, but with some embarrassment, "I see plainly, however, that notwithstanding our objections, for this once we must yield to the wishes of our friends. The offence which we would give, and the unpleasantness which would arise from declining this invitation, would be most disagreeable; and, moreover, prejudicial both to my husband's interests and my own; we are expected to hold constant intercourse with Herr Kühneman's colleagues and their families. I most sincerely hope that it may not occur again. We will be better prepared in the future, and Elizabeth shall go frequently to Woltheim this winter to visit her grandparents."

"You will surely ask the poor victim's consent," interposed Aunt Wina sharply, "before you send her into exile."

"Elizabeth is always ready to go to Woltheim," returned the mother hastily. "She has really spent more of her time there than she has in Berlin. At any rate, dear Aunt," said her niece, apologetically, "this is only a family ball, given by Geheimerath von Bauer, my husband's most intimate colleague."

"Are they connections of the family?" inquired her aunt gravely.

"No, they are not," she answered, somewhat embarrassed.

"But waiving discussion, our business to-day is to consult with you, Elise, how we shall dress our dear child," interposed Aunt Wina, quickly and

pressingly. "We are not disposed to let this opportunity pass without improving it. Paula and I desire," she said formally, "to present Elizabeth with her first ball *toilette*. We have decided upon white *crêpe* as being the most suitable material. It is so dainty, so fragrant—just the dress for a *débutante*. But the harmonizing color is the great question now," she continued, warming with her subject. "I am for light blue. Elizabeth, notwithstanding her nut-brown eyes and dark curls, could really be called a blonde, she is so fair, and blue is so heavenly, so sweet, so pure."

"But *ponceau* would be much more *piquant*," suggested Paula.

"I leave the *toilette*, with all its accessories, to your united taste and judgment," rejoined the mother, with a laugh. "It is absolutely a matter of indifference to me should you decide upon blue or *ponceau*."

"Do not say so, dear Elise," returned Wina, "It should not be a matter of indifference to a mother. It is Elizabeth's first entrance into society, and it may exert a determining influence upon her destiny."

This assertion was a little too much for Emilie to pass by without remark.

"Are you in sober earnest," she exclaimed, greatly shocked, "when you assert that such trivialities as the choice of a red or blue *crêpe* may have a determining influence upon Elizabeth's destiny? Surely you know not how foolishly you are speaking."

"My dear Emilie," said Wina, sitting a little more erect and with considerable asperity in her tone, "I speak from experience. You will find out for yourself what it means some day."

"The selection of the contrasting color I leave also to your taste, Wina," said the mother soothingly, "and now the all-important case is settled."

"Yes, the dear Elise," said Paula, turning good-naturedly to the Generalin, "she is kept so busy with the six little ones! We would gladly help her, but she will not let us."

Elise was silent. It would not do to say to the kind foolish old aunts, "Your presence would be more burdensome than my work." Paula continued meanwhile, "Do you not think she looks worn out? To my certain knowledge, she has sat up for two successive nights until one o'clock sewing for the children."

"Why did you do it?" inquired her aunt, with kindly reproach.

"I felt it to be a necessity," replied Elise, "but I frankly confess that I am exhausted and unnerved by my long vigils."

"This nerve weakness is a sad thing," responded her aunt, "more particularly as it exerts so injurious and depressing an influence upon the spirits."

"Were it my case, I would have Elizabeth give up her English lessons," said Emilie, curtly, "and have some one do my sewing for me."

"When you are a mother you will think differently," returned Elise.

"No, I would not," she replied with emphasis, "I should consider it a sin to do what I knew would unnerve me and prevent my being as cheerful and as happy as I would otherwise be."

"Sitting up for part or the whole of two consecutive nights is not enough to disturb the nerves," interposed Wina, "it is because of the *continuous* strain day in and day out."

"My mother must have had splendid nerves," said Frau Kühneman, "for I have no recollection of seeing her otherwise than bright and cheerful."

"I agree with Emilie," interposed the Generalin, "I do not believe your mother would have permitted *you* to take expensive English lessons at the risk of losing a night's rest. And I am *sure* that your father," she added somewhat hesitatingly, "would not have permitted it."

Frau Kühneman was silent. Aunt Wina, on the contrary, now insisted upon being heard. With highly crimsoned cheeks and in an excitable, angry manner, she began a long harangue upon the contrast of life in Berlin and in the little village of Woltheim. Happily this tirade was brought to an abrupt termination by the ringing of the door bell, and in a few moments Elizabeth entered the room.

In truth she was a winsome maiden; mirth and love sparkled and glowed by turns in her luminous nut-brown eyes; her slender willowy form was full of grace and motion, and although "her years approached to womanhood, there was in her manner much of the gayety and simple happiness, because

of the innocence of a child." Only to look upon her gladdened the hearts of her two old aunts; "the sunny days were brighter and the cloudy ones less gloomy" when the sweet, joyous countenance of their darling shone upon them. Elizabeth greeted the Generalin with warmth, Emilie also. Aunt Wina and Aunt Paula received a cordial welcome, but by no means so deferential.

"We have just concluded upon your ball *toilette*," began Aunt Wina, ignoring all that had passed.

"Thank you very much," returned Elizabeth, "but I would prefer making the selection myself."

"Elizabeth!" exclaimed her mother admonishingly. "It is the wish of your aunts to present you with your *toilette*."

"Oh! how very good of you," cried Elizabeth warmly.

And now began an excited recapitulation of all the ground that had been gone over before—of white *crêpe*, heaven's blue, *ponceau*.

"I perfectly agree with you in your selection of white *crêpe*," said Elizabeth, with condescending self-assurance, "but I would give *my* preference for corn-flower blue as a trimming. It is my favorite shade."

"The child is not far wrong," responded Aunt Wina with a flattering smile. "Light blue is somewhat sentimental, and *ponceau* too *prononcé*. Corn-flower is the happy medium."

The conversation was again in danger of being carried too far, and the mother quietly sent Elizabeth out of the room, ostensibly to order tea. The maiden aunts, who did not feel very comfortable in the society of Frau Reisenhagen and her critical daughter, left the room at the same time with their niece, to indulge in a few confidential whispers before their departure.

The Geheimerathin was now alone with her aunt and Emilie; her nerves, which had been anything but strengthened by this last visit, gave way, and she poured out unreservedly the pent-up emotions of her full heart into the ears of her sympathizing auditors. "I am really glad," said the tired woman, "that for once you have had a chance of taking a glimpse into our family life. These ever recurring struggles date from the time of my marriage, although they were not so heavy during the lifetime of my husband's parents. Both Wina and Paula lay claim to Elizabeth, greatly to her injury, I am aware. Although our views differ so widely," continued the poor woman, "family duty compels me to keep up a constant and friendly intercourse with them."

"Certainly, that is as it should be," returned her aunt, "but"—

"*But?*" repeated her niece with insistence. "One should hearken to God rather than man."

"If one only knew how to decide, even in trivial affairs," said Elise, with a long-drawn sigh. "One cannot always tell what is for the best."

"A faithful servant of God will pray for counsel, and He has promised that He will give it to those who ask for it," said her aunt, gravely.

The Geheimerathin was silent; her conscience accused her. Like the unfaithful servant, she knew her duty but she did it not.

"For example," she said, "this ball which is now under consideration has cost me, and my husband also, much grave thought."

"My dear niece," returned her aunt, "I would advise you most earnestly not to allow Elizabeth to take the first step in this direction; it will be much harder for you to deny her upon the next occasion. If you have not the moral courage to refuse her now, your opportunity will be gone, and to-morrow will find you still weaker than you are to-day."

At this juncture Elizabeth entered, bearing a plate containing some thin slices of bread and butter and one of buns, the maid following in her wake with the tea service.

"I will serve you beautifully," she cried, with childlike glee. "I think it is so delightful to have tea at early twilight. When I have a house of my own I will always have it served at this hour. For such a stormy, gloomy afternoon as this nothing could be more delightful than to have tea served in an elegantly appointed, cosy living-room."

"It will not be difficult to realize so modest a wish as that," returned her mother smilingly; "moreover, you have the pleasure at hand," she added.

"No, mamma, my fancy takes a higher flight," replied Elizabeth, with a little laugh, "the children are so noisy, so disorderly, it is always so unquiet in our home."

"Come and visit me often," said Emilie, "and we will read together, drink tea together, and practice our music together. I reign in my kingdom alone, for I am the youngest of our family and the only one at home."

"You charm me, dear cousin, with the prospect. I will come, you may depend upon *that*," exclaimed the young girl delightedly, throwing her arms around Emilie and embracing her as warmly as fourteen years before she had taken the table and the chair to her heart. "I cannot come for several days," she added, reflectively; "to-morrow and the day after to-morrow I have an engagement with my aunts at the *pension*; then comes the ball."

Elizabeth was of too observant a nature not to notice by the expression of her mother's face that this talk was not agreeable to her, but her heart was full and her spirits so buoyant that it was an impossibility for her to keep silent. "Dear aunt," she began persuasively, "I beg of you not to ask mamma to give up going to the ball. My heart is set upon it."

"I have already spoken to your mother upon the subject," said the Generalin, quietly.

"And I, for my part, will agree to have five o'clock teas all through the winter if you will only give up going," said Emilie.

"Oh! you dear, good cousin," laughed Elizabeth. "I will go to the ball first, and then I will enjoy your charming teas. Dear aunt," she continued, turning to her with an odd little laugh, half mischievous and half defiant, "perhaps you do not know that it is the mode in Berlin for professed Christians to go to balls, concerts and the theater."

"Elizabeth, you are speaking nonsense," expostulated her mother in a displeased tone, "I think you scarcely know how foolishly you are talking."

There was a moment's pause. Then the Generalin inquired of Frau Kühneman about the younger children, and requested to see them. Elizabeth and Emilie ran from the room, returning shortly with the three little ones from the nursery. Fritz and Karl, the two students, came in also; a sprightly conversation was now kept up, and all unpleasantness was for the time averted.

CHAPTER VI.

THERE was great excitement within the Kühneman mansion the afternoon before the ball, particularly in the children's apartment. Elizabeth to go to a ball! That was indeed something out of the usual.

Little Charlotte, shaking her head ominously, said, "Elizabeth going to a ball! Is it a very large ball?"

"Oh, no!" explained Marie. "It is only a family ball."

"Ah, a family ball! But they will not roll it all the time?" she asked seriously.

A simultaneous laugh was poor Charlotte's answer.

"A ball," said Marie, in an explanatory tone, "is a large company."

"And because the people dance and whirl about, and everything goes topsy-turvy and hurly-burly, that is the reason it is called a ball," said Fritz.

All kinds of dreams and fancies ran riot in the child's brain at this description. She gazed thoughtfully upon her sister.

"I do not understand why Elizabeth was allowed to take dancing lessons and we were not," said Karl, the second son, a merry, gifted lad, but the source of some anxiety to his parents.

"Because you are only stupid boys," said Elizabeth, jestingly.

"But you will dance with gentlemen this evening who were just such stupid boys, if not a little more so," continued Karl.

"Hist!" exclaimed Elizabeth, admonishingly. "You heard papa say that Herr von Bauer told grandpapa the cuirassiers out of Braunhausen had been invited."

"Cuirassiers!" echoed Charlotte, in still further bewilderment.

"Yes, a whole regiment," said Karl, emphatically.

"But, Elizabeth," began Charlotte, apprehensively, "why do you go where there are soldiers?"

"Charlotte is afraid that they will take Elizabeth captive," said Karl, merrily.

The little girl nodded assent.

"The cuirassiers are friends of grandfather and of Herr von Bauer," explained the wise Marie. "Papa and mamma are going, and they will bring Elizabeth back with them."

Fritz, the elder brother, who bore the grandfather's name, and who greatly resembled him not only in appearance, but in character, now approached his sister, and said, reflectively, "For my part, Elizabeth, I cannot understand how you can be so delighted to go to a ball. You would not have credited it yourself last Easter."

The two elder children had been confirmed at

that time, and the lad had not forgotten the seriousness of the occasion.

"But papa and mamma go with me," responded Elizabeth, in a low tone.

"They would be very glad if you would only say you did not care to go," continued Fritz.

His sister looked at him thoughtfully.

"You could decide even yet; it is not too late," he said, persuasively.

"Yes, plenty of time to decide," cried the merry Karl, "and for the money that the carriage will cost we children can have a good time. You had much better give up going, and let *us* have the money."

"Yes, yes," cried all the little ones in chorus, "that is the best thing for you to do."

"Children, do not be so stupid," said Elizabeth petulantly, "think what a disappointment it would be to my aunts, and what then would become of my white *crêpe* dress?"

As the uproar subsided, the young girl quietly made her escape into the living room, where she was alone.

Mechanically she seated herself at the piano, but not to play—her heart was too heavy. This ball, which her foolish aunts represented as altogether innocent and proper, had already occasioned Elizabeth more disquiet than she herself was conscious of. Thoughts of Easter, which Fritz's remark had recalled to her mind, oppressed her; serious questionings arose. What had she promised? At

her confirmation? What would her grandmother say, did she know she was going to a ball, and that she was looking forward with pleasure to dancing with strange officers? She sat motionless for some moments; then reaching for her music, she began to play with one hand, while she sang slowly and softly the confirmation hymn:

"I have pledged, and would not falter,
Truth, obedience, love to Thee;
I have vows upon Thine altar
Ever Thine alone to be,
And forever
Sin and all its lusts to flee."

"Dear Lord," she breathed, "I will not disobey Thee again. I will be faithful to my vows." Tears dropped unheeded upon her clasped hands; willingly would she have given up at this moment the pleasure of the ball had she received any encouragement.

Her mother also wept bitter tears as she lay upon a couch in her cabinet near by. She had no idea of Elizabeth's feelings on the subject until she heard the words of the hymn that her daughter was softly singing. A sudden light illumined her mind; with a sharp pang she thought, "The child would be willing to give up the pleasure, the unfaithful mother is the hindrance. But Elizabeth is so beautiful—far too beautiful to blush unseen. There will be an assemblage of distinguished men at this ball; perchance my dear child will be the

chosen bride of one of them. She will be peerless among the young maidens there."

Before the singing of the hymn, the mother, attracted by the merry laughter in the nursery, had stood for some moments unobserved upon the threshold, listening to the talk of the children about the ball, the officers, and Elizabeth's *finale* to Fritz's admonition, "My parents accompany me."

Opening her book of devotion, she now tearfully read, "As often as I feel myself unquiet, and weighed down, I find that I have strayed from this doctrine, 'Lift thou up my mind, which is pressed down by a load of sins; and draw up my whole desire to things heavenly, that having tasted the sweetness of heavenly happiness, it may be irksome for me even to think of earthly things.'"

At this moment the door bell rang and her meditations were interrupted. She arose and hastily dried her tears. Mother and daughter met in the ante-room to receive the two aunts, whose voices they had recognized. How strange it seemed! Was it all a troubled dream? Aunt Paula and Aunt Wina were in a gay, excited mood, and as they talked, all that they affirmed seemed so plausible, so reasonable, that the mother almost forgot the words she had read in the secret of her cabinet about the strivings of nature and of grace: "In a very contrary and in a subtle manner do they move, so that they can hardly be distinguished. Nature is crafty and seduceth many, ensnareth and deceiveth them, and always proposeth herself for her end and object."

"Elizabeth's dress is just completed," exclaimed Wina. "I was compelled to make some alterations myself, so that the train would be more girlish, and less cumbersome. Our *Modiste* has not the requisite *chic*. In spite of all my lecturing, she is as likely to make a costume for an eighteen-year-old girl as elaborate as she would for a woman of forty."

"But look!" exclaimed Aunt Paula ecstatically, as her sister drew forth the fragrant, soft, white garment, "is it not lovely, is it not heavenly?"

"It is tasteful and elegant in its simplicity, and sweetly suitable for our beloved *débutante*," said Wina.

Elizabeth's eyes brightened with pleasure as she gazed upon the charming garment—her first evening dress. But the mother's heart was heavy.

Wina's all observant, sharp black eyes soon detected her sister-in-law's unresponsiveness. After one scrutinizing glance, she thought with angry scorn, "How weak, how fanatical a woman! She does not know her own mind." Conscious of her own superiority—of her own well-balanced mind—she embraced the opportunity for giving full expression to her opinion upon the subject in hand. She was uncompromising in tone and manner, and there was a perceptible sneer in the smile that curled her lips as she spoke. Turning suddenly to her niece, she handed her the evening dress, saying with *empressement*, "Allow your Aunt Wina and your Aunt Paula to present you with

your first ball *toilette*; be happy and enjoy it; rejoice heartily in your youth—it is right and becoming for the young to rejoice; partake of all the harmless, innocent pleasures that come in your way. These things will not prevent you from being a child of God, or from observing your seasons of devotion. Everything in its time, and as St. Paul says, nothing at the wrong time.”

The poor mother could say nothing, but she stood as upon burning coals the while. What right had she to object? It seemed to be her own motto: “Walk in the straight and narrow path sometimes, and sometimes not.” But she could no longer listen to their absurd, childish chatter, and to Wina’s great displeasure, pointedly interrupted her harangue by saying, “I have a severe headache, Wina; let us dismiss the subject.”

“Poor Elise,” said the sympathizing Paula, “I knew that you were not yourself to-day.”

“Would it not be better that you remain at home this evening,” remarked Wina, maliciously.

“Oh, no!” replied Frau Kühneman. Then added, with a little ironical laugh, “Should I do so, this charming evening *toilette* will not have the opportunity of being admired to-night.”

“Then you would not trust your daughter with us?” said Wina, in a sharp tone.

“I have nothing to say about that. It is customary for a mother to introduce her daughter into society.”

This remark was misinterpreted by the sisters-

in-law. They covertly smiled, as they thought Elise wished to see the impression Elizabeth's first appearance in society would create. "I do not doubt that," responded Wina, with a derisive laugh.

"And such a daughter!" added Paula.

Frau Kühneman excused herself and hurriedly withdrew to see that the children's supper was properly served. The rest of the party made their way to the nursery, for this was the shrine where their divinity was to be robed. Wina was fully persuaded that this first ball, this epoch in the life of her niece, was a suitable opportunity for her to assume the *rôle* of mentor. Accordingly, she resumed the interrupted speech. With zeal and dignity, she as was her wont, amplified the words of St. Paul after a version of her own.

"It is my impartial opinion," she began, "that this little maiden might be made to appear to better advantage than she now does."

This exceptional preliminary at once arrested Elizabeth's attention. She stood motionless before her aunt and opened her great brown eyes to their fullest extent.

"Yes, Elizabeth," repeated her aunt, "I mean just what I say. The way that you are gazing at me this very moment is deserving of reprimand. It is unbecoming in a modest young girl to open her eyes so wide; it gives her a look of assurance that is not lady-like, not genteel."

"A young lady should be as modest as a violet,"

added Paula, "and when addressed, should listen with drooping head."

"Yes, my dear child," continued Wina, with grave insistence, "bethink you that you make your first appearance in society to-night. Many scrutinizing and criticising eyes will be directed towards Herr Kühneman's daughter. I beg of you to be exceptionally unobtrusive; have a regard for the proprieties. A certain reserve of manner is becoming to a young lady. Let your carriage be subdued, reposeful, as is fitting. I do not mean you to be stiff. There is a happy medium of lady-like, dignified ease. You must also have regard to your speech. Do not talk with so much spontaneity, as you are too greatly given to do. Remember that you are no longer a child; you must therefore put away childish things."

"I, for my part," rejoined Aunt Paula, "would far rather see a young maiden shy and embarrassed than *too* self-confident in manner."

"You will have to send Elizabeth to a play actor to undergo training," cried Fritz, who, greatly amused by his aunts' exordium, had been sitting quietly in one corner of the room taking observations.

"Beg pardon, young sir, but you misconstrue my meaning. I do not desire that your sister should merely *assume* the rôle of modesty—I wish her to be *truly* modest, and should she make the beginning to-night, it will do her no harm."

Elizabeth's face flushed. Elevating her head

somewhat higher than usual and curling her lip, she said shortly and resolutely, "I am as I am, and I will not assume a *rôle* for the evening."

"So!" said Wina, sharply. "And what do you expect will be *society's* verdict regarding you?"

"I do not care one penny for the verdict of society," returned Elizabeth, with a proud little toss of her head.

"A beautiful training! In my day, Elizabeth, such a sentiment as you have just expressed would have been considered shocking, and would have received a sharp rebuke. That a young maiden should disregard the proprieties of polite society and care nothing for public opinion, is unbecoming, to say the least of it. Censure and praise should be more than a matter of indifference to you, Elizabeth."

What a confusion of terms and ideas, thought Fritz, as he advanced toward his sister and took up his position by her side. "We have not been brought up to have much regard for the verdict of the world, or the 'world's wife,' either, Aunt Wina," said Fritz. "On the contrary, our parents have taught us to seek the favor of God and the respect of Christian people."

"Fritz, do not overact *your* part," cried Wina, angrily; and although she took no further notice of what the lad had said, her worldly-wise talk came to an abrupt ending. "And now, young gentleman, I request you to leave the room," she added; "we would make our *toilette*."

As soon as Fritz withdrew, the work of preparation was ceremoniously begun, and in due course of time successfully finished. The carriage, of course, came too soon, and Herr Kühneman had knocked impatiently at the door several times before they were ready. Soon, however, the rustle of silken trains was heard along the hall, the ladies were lifted into the carriage and the horses sped quickly away.

Deep silence reigned throughout the journey. Frau Kühneman was still suffering from headache, Aunt Wina nervous and irritated, and poor Aunt Paula's head was perplexed to know how to overcome the unpleasant silence that had settled down like a pall over the party. As for Elizabeth, her young heart had never throbbed so rapidly as it did beneath the white crêpe corsage. Their way led through the Park. The young girl sat motionless, dreamily gazing out of the coach window at the quickly vanishing trees, with their cold, grey branches stretching far and wide. "A few moments more, and you will enter the enchanted palace," thought Elizabeth. An electric thrill penetrated every nerve at the thought. She could not arrive at a decision in her own mind whether what she was doing or feeling was right or wrong. But her parents were with her, and she comforted herself with the words uttered with such insistence by Aunt Wina, "Youth comes but once. Be merry; everything in its time."

CHAPTER VII.

THE folding doors of the ball room were thrown open. Herr Kühneman and his wife entered the salon, Elizabeth and her two aunts closely following. A flood of light streamed from the open door; a marvelous glamour of gay toilettes, splendid uniforms, beauty and fragrance, burst upon the young *débutante's* astonished vision. Silken trains rustled, and a subdued murmur of voices and whisperings sounded in her ear. Elizabeth was conscious that the eager gaze of many eyes was directed toward her, and, to the gratification of Aunt Wina, cast down her eyes as timidly as was seemly in a young maiden who made her first entrance into society. She did not raise her drooping head until she was presented to the hostess and to several of the elderly ladies; then, making her obeisance with grace, she passed through the trying ordeal so modestly as to win triumphant encomiums from her critical aunt. At length the young girl found herself happily seated by her mother's side.

From her point of vantage Elizabeth looked eagerly about her, returning gracefully, now and again, the greetings of numerous acquaintances. At length her wandering gaze rested upon the end of the salon, where groups of gentlemen were gathered, awaiting the signal for the opening of the

dance. To her delight, she saw several officers whom she recognized, by their uniform, as Cuirassiers from her grandfather's old garrison in Braunschhausen. Her attention was arrested by one of the gentlemen in the group, a slender, stately figure of noble bearing, who towered above the rest of his comrades.

"Who is that glorious phenomenon?" whispered Aunt Wina to Frau von Bauer.

"A veritable god of war," said Paula, ecstatically.

The orchestra drowned the answer, and Elizabeth could not distinguish the name. There was a sudden movement among the gentlemen, and the hearts of the young maidens throbbed more rapidly, for the momentous question was about to be settled—Who will be the favored ones?

"My dear friend," began Frau Kühneman's neighbor, a good-natured, superficial woman of the world, "you will experience this evening what it means to introduce a daughter into society."

The Geheimerathin answered with a little laugh, "It is a matter of indifference to me if Elizabeth be invited to few or to many dances. If to but few, it will be decidedly better for the child."

But it was *not* an affair of indifference to her. It was with some difficulty that she could conceal a certain nervous tension, which she was ashamed to confess even to herself, much less openly avow it as her simple-hearted neighbor had done.

The orchestra sounded, and the gentlemen passed

quickly across the salon. Frau Kühneman's neighbor grasped her hand in her agitation, and whispered with a profound sigh, "*Our* daughters will not be favored this set."

The two young girls sat silently, meanwhile, beside their mothers, with eyes downcast, awaiting their fate. "This situation is intolerably disagreeable," soliloquized Elizabeth, indignantly, "to be compelled to sit here as upon a salver, waiting to be chosen. I feel humiliated. The simpletons! I do not care if they do not invite me. I would far rather be at home playing with the children."

In the midst of her irritation, Elizabeth was conscious of two figures standing before her. "Allow me to present Herr von Kadden," said her host briefly, then quickly withdrew. The presentée requested the favor of her hand for the first set. When she looked up she was conscious that she was undergoing the scrutiny of a pair of dark blue eyes, and at the same time she recognized that these eyes belonged to the handsome, slender Lieutenant, whose distinguished appearance had already attracted her attention, as well as that of her two critical aunts. Passing quickly across the room, Elizabeth found herself whirled off in the arms of her strange partner. At a pause in the dance, conversation necessarily began. The cuirassier was young and evidently unaccustomed to the ordinary talk of the ball-room. Bowing deferentially, he began with the simple question, "You are fond of dancing?" His smile was so bright

and his manner so agreeable that Elizabeth soon regained her self-possession and briefly replied: "I really do not know, for this is my first ball."

"Your first ball!" he repeated, in a tone of surprise, "and I have been so fortunate as to be your first partner! You will enjoy numberless opportunities for the dance in Berlin, Fräulein," he added.

"I do not know if I shall profit by them," was Elizabeth's rejoinder. "I will see how I am pleased with this evening's experience."

"Surely there cannot be any doubt upon that score," he returned, in some surprise.

"It is more than possible that I may not be pleased," she answered with a smile. "Should I fare as badly as some of my neighbors have done, I do not think that I should ever go to another ball."

"It must be very unpleasant for a young lady under such circumstances," he said with an answering smile.

"It must, indeed," returned Elizabeth, with indignant emphasis; then added, as she stood haughtily erect, "before the dance began I felt provoked that I had come, and I heartily wished myself at home playing with my sisters."

Herr von Kadden's smiling glance was riveted for a moment upon his partner's expressive countenance, then with a merry laugh he assured her that an opportunity for indignation would not again be accorded her.

"Why not?" she asked.

"Allow me," said the young officer, "to engage you for the rest of the dances."

"That would be tiresome," returned Elizabeth, quickly.

"That is true," rejoined her partner, while his bronzed face took on a deeper glow. "Pardon me, it was too much to ask."

"You misunderstood me," said Elizabeth in some embarrassment, "I meant that it would be tiresome for my partner." Suddenly it occurred to her that she had forgotten her aunt's advice and had been talking too much and too familiarly to a stranger. She looked up at him with such a deprecating, questioning glance in her lovely eyes that the cuirassier's irritation was at once appeased.

"Dare I solicit your hand for the next set?" he urged eagerly.

Elizabeth with a blush and a bright smile assented; then remembering that her mother had cautioned her not to engage herself to the same partner for two successive dances, she pleaded fatigue and requested him to escort her to her seat.

"The next dance is provided for," said her partner, smiling his sympathy.

"And now," said Elizabeth, laughing merrily. "I shall not be satisfied until my unfortunate neighbor receives an invitation. Poor girl! she has been going to balls for the past ten years, and has had but an occasional opportunity for dancing. Is not that frightful?"

"I will agree to invite Fräulein Laura for all my disengaged dances," said the young man eagerly.

"That would be tiresome too," returned Elizabeth.

"No, on the contrary" he answered quickly, "it will give me pleasure."

Elizabeth was now escorted to her place. Aunt Wina stood before her, watchful as a bird of prey. "My dear child," she began in an excited tone, "how could you be so talkative to an entire stranger? It is not etiquette, either, to dance the whole set."

The young girl was aware that her aunt was right, and with heightened color, and no little confusion, she said apologetically and with child-like candor, "But, Aunt Wina, he did not seem to me like a stranger."

"If he was familiar, the less familiar should you have been," returned her aunt cuttingly. Then laying her hand upon the drooping head, she caressingly smoothed back the disordered curls from the fair brow. Wina was charmed with her lovely niece and with the manifest admiration that her first appearance in society had created.

But the mother's heart was heavy. She was glad, however, that Elizabeth's child-like innocence and candor was not corrupted by the worldly-wise counsels of her aunt. Frau Kühneman's anxious gaze had been riveted upon Elizabeth and her partner throughout the dance. Her heart condemned her for leading her sweet young daughter

into the midst of the fascinations of this brilliant assemblage. "Is there not danger in it for her?"—this was the question that tormented the poor mother's heart. "I am unnerved," she reflected, "and accordingly see naught this evening but spectres of coming ill."

Elizabeth was not allowed a long rest; her hand was solicited for the following set. Her neighbor, Fräulein Laura, sat meanwhile with eyes downcast as she listened to the invitation extended to her by the slender "god of war" for the next contra-dance. Herr von Kadden was now Elizabeth's *vis-à-vis*, and greeted her with such a bright, confidential smile, that a sharp pang shot through the mother's heart. The partners exchanged, and to her dismay she saw an answering smile upon her daughter's face.

The dance ended. Elizabeth returned to her mother's side, and again, like a bird of prey, Aunt Wina stood before her. Her sharp black eyes had noted the exchange of confidential smiles. "Pray what did you mean, Elizabeth, by the significant look that you bestowed upon Herr von Kadden?" she demanded.

"He is certainly a very singular man, Aunt Wina," laughed Elizabeth. "He told me that he was going to invite Fräulein Laura for every one of his disengaged dances. He knew that I did not believe that he would do so, and so he smiled as he stood opposite me."

"How indiscreet in any gentleman to dance so

often with the same lady," returned the now angry aunt. "Any young maiden under such circumstances might naturally conclude that he was especially interested in her.

Elizabeth, with heightened color and evident embarrassment, said, that she knew Herr von Kadden acted from a good motive in inviting the poor girl to dance. Aunt Wina took a different view of the young officer's conduct, and expressed herself with considerable warmth upon the subject, declaring in no doubtful language that she considered it in the highest degree reprehensible and indiscreet, to say the least of it, for any gentleman to act as he had done.

Indignant at her aunt's assertion, Elizabeth impulsively returned, "You need not be in any doubt as to his intention, Aunt Wina, for in each set that he does not dance with me he will be my *vis-à-vis*, and Laura will be his partner."

"How perfectly odious in the man," returned her aunt. "Do you mean to tell me, Elizabeth, that Herr von Kadden will dance with no one but yourself and Fräulein Laura? How regardless of the proprieties; etiquette demands that he should invite the daughter of the house! What an interesting bit of gossip this will make! You and Laura will play a pretty comedy for the lookers-on in Berlin. Nothing but sheer ill-nature prompts his conduct. He would bring into disrepute a young lady upon her first appearance in society, and by so doing give full rein to evil, scandal-loving

tongues. You unfortunate child! This is what you reap for your mistimed candor and childish prattle," whispered Wina, in her sharp, incisive tones.

"The man's very looks are intimidating" sighed Paula in chorus. Suddenly the cuirassier stood before them, and with a deferential bow and a smile of mutual understanding, claimed Elizabeth's hand for the next set.

Frau Kühneman used all her powers of persuasion to pacify the two irate aunts, and assured them that their apprehensions existed only in their own imaginations. After a moment's pause, she added quietly, "What if Elizabeth and Laura are the subject of an hour's talk? Let gossips say what they will, it cannot alter the facts in the case. I do not see for my part that the young man has done anything wrong." But all her efforts were in vain. Her sisters-in-law refused to be appeased, and bundled themselves off to interview Frau von Bauer, and indemnify themselves by pouring out the full tide of their indignation upon her devoted head, and at the same time glean some information regarding this dangerous cuirassier.

"It is just like Herr von Kadden" cried the amused woman, laughing heartily, "He has not done this from any evil intent; of this you may rest assured, ladies. He is a young man of most exceptionably fine qualities, an attractive, clever man, and a brave soldier also. I grant that he is excitable and impetuous. His cognomen in the

regiment is Hotspur, which is truly indicative of the man. It is ever a word and a blow with him. Then" she added, archly, "he also enjoys the enviable reputation of being an unerring marksman."

"What a dangerous man," sighed Paula, "Look, sister, our dear innocent child is in his arms."

"Under the circumstances," said the politic Wina, reflectively, bethinking herself how unadvisable it was to give cause of provocation to such a one, "I will caution Elizabeth to be prudent, but advise her at the same time to fulfil all her engagements with him to the letter. It is our better policy to give no cause for offence to this man."

"Yes," sighed Paula, as she recalled Frau von Bauer's assertion that the cuirassier was famous as a marksman, "many a mortal combat has originated in a few thoughtless words."

Frau von Bauer succeeded in partially appeasing the apprehensions of her two excited guests. Surrendering themselves to the inevitable, they awaited in feverish impatience the close of the waltz.

Elizabeth, escorted by her partner, returned to her seat, wholly unprepared for the excitement that awaited her appearance, the signal for an avalanche of reproaches, apprehensions and instructions, which simultaneously overwhelmed the unfortunate culprit. Information which they had gleaned regarding this reckless Hotspur—conventional rules, etiquette, the proprieties, warnings and duels, were commingled in one general overflow. In conclusion Aunt Wina gravely advised

her niece "To be more careful in any further compulsory intercourse with the objectionable cuirassier." It was truly fortunate for poor Elizabeth that she had another partner for the next set, and accordingly would have time to restore her paralyzed faculties before her hand would be laid claim to by her now dreaded partner.

Upon taking her place in the dance, there stood Herr von Kadden and Fräulein Laura opposite her. Again the young officer greeted her by another bright smile, but there was no response.

"Splendid," whispered Wina to her sister as she watched Elizabeth.

"Admirable," added Paula.

"Such dignified, womanly reserve!" said Wina triumphantly, "he will be surprised." But, alas! even as they were speaking, to their manifest dismay, they saw Elizabeth smile archly as Herr von Kadden bowed and gazed upon her blushing face.

Elizabeth at first obeyed the instructions she had received from her aunts, and forced herself to reserve. The young man was quick to notice her altered manner. Vague misgivings tormented him. "Have I offended you, Fräulein?" he asked in a pause in the dance, and his eyes sought hers so beseechingly that an involuntary "No" flew from her lips. "What is it, then?" he urged, "what have I done?" Elizabeth could resist no longer, and with child-like candor confessed that "she had been advised to be circumspect in her intercourse with him."

"Has some one been speaking about me to you?" he asked hastily, and his dark face took on a deeper shade. Scarcely had the words left her lips than Elizabeth saw the mistake she had made and reproved herself for her rash thoughtlessness.

"My comrade, perchance?" he said.

"Now for the duel," thought Elizabeth, but recovering herself, she said hastily, "No, no, it was only my two old aunts who advised me; they have such a horror of duels."

"I could not challenge *them*," he rejoined jestingly, and the young girl could not restrain a sympathetic laugh.

The cuirassier's countenance underwent a sudden change and a smile played about his mobile lips.

And now the confidential talk was resumed. Elizabeth spoke wisely upon the wicked practice of dueling, and concluded by saying that she was unable to comprehend how any man in the full possession of his senses, or with any moral perception whatsoever, could challenge another to mortal combat. The young officer listened respectfully, but amusedly, then rejoined:

"Fräulein, if you take that view of the subject, it is plain to be seen that the emotion of anger is a stranger to your breast."

"Oh, no!" replied Elizabeth; "but when years of discretion are reached one learns naturally to control one's temper."

"Control it?" he rejoined in surprise, "that is proof positive that you do not know what anger

means. Should I attempt to control my temper, it would only make matters worse. There is no middle course with me; if I give free vent to my rage, it is soon over. And, in regard to dueling, you ladies have romantic ideas of its wickedness. A soldier must resent an insult; he dare not act otherwise."

"Are not the after-effects of your fits of anger very disagreeable, to say the least of it?" asked Elizabeth, gravely.

"I have devised an admirable plan," he replied, merrily. "One only needs a scape-goat upon whom to vent one's rage. Now, fortunately I have such a one at hand; my groom is my safety-valve. He and I have come to an amicable agreement upon the subject. He receives my scoldings and blows for a consideration, and feels that he has not made such a very bad bargain after all. And I assure you, *Fräulein*, that we live very comfortably together."

"That is terrible," said Elizabeth, shaking her head reprovingly. "You should conquer your temper. I know that we cannot do so in our own strength," she continued, hesitatingly—then suddenly paused as she reflected that she was introducing rather a serious topic to an entire stranger.

Herr von Kadden was conscious of what Elizabeth intended to say, but interposed with a light laugh, "Not through one's own strength?—through whose then?"

"Through the assistance of a Higher Power,"

replied Elizabeth, in a low tone and with heightened color.

"Young ladies, I apprehend," said the young officer, a mocking smile hovering upon his lips the while, "conquer their faults by a Higher Power. As a child, I believed most religiously that my guardian angel had charge of my lying down and my rising up."

Elizabeth's clear, steadfast gaze was riveted in horror upon the face of the cuirassier. Involuntarily she recoiled. "This man is a scoffer," she thought. "A man so weak and unprincipled, so void of all sense of propriety or of honor that he has tacitly concluded a bargain with his poor servant for the privilege of beating him!" She could with difficulty repress her indignation. After a pause, when she had somewhat regained her self-control, she asked, "Do you mean that you acknowledge no higher power than that of your own will?"

"A man's will lies nearest him," was the evasive reply, "but I am open to conviction, Fräulein," he added, laughing lightly, "that is, if there is a better way."

"I was very impetuous when I was a child," said Elizabeth, "but my grand-parents taught me to conquer my temper, and it has been my experience that even the love I bore them was a greater power than my own will."

"But I am so unfortunate as to have neither grandparents nor parents. I have only a sister,

who knows of the agreement which I have entered into with my groom, and moreover, she approves of the contract and advises me to continue it," said the young officer with a smile.

"She might have given you better advice," returned Elizabeth, shortly.

"Then you do not hold to the angel theory?" he queried.

Elizabeth answered haughtily, "My opinion is that it is the extreme of cowardice, and utterly disgraceful, for a soldier to propose to atone with money for the wrong he has done his servant, in driving such a bargain as you have done. Have you ever read of a similar experience in the lives of good and great men?" She was too much excited to observe how very unpleasant it was for her partner to listen to her, and she continued indignantly, "And I would advise you upon such occasions to solitude—then you could vent your rage where it would do the most good."

Herr von Kadden did not answer: an angry cloud passed over his face. Elizabeth was frightened at her own words, and relieved when the music ceased and she was escorted by her partner in frigid silence to her seat.

"You did not dance one of the sets," said the watchful mother quietly to the young girl.

"No, I did not," began Elizabeth in the greatest excitement. Aunt Wina and Aunt Paula meanwhile had drawn near, and stood listening curiously to her rapid words. "Herr von Kadden

and I were engaged in a serious conversation. He is a dangerous man, a real scoffer."

"It is incomprehensible to me how Herr von Bauer could have extended an invitation to such a one as he," sighed Wina.

"By that remark do you mean, Wina, that many of these people think differently from Herr von Kadden upon religious subjects?" asked Frau Kühneman calmly.

"They at least do not openly avow their skepticism," returned Paula with emphasis; "they do not make a boast of it, they have some decency and respect for the opinions of others. How charming Herr von Stottenheim is!" she added irrelevantly. "He is also a cuirassier, and Herr von Kadden's comrade." The politic lieutenant had won Paula's heart by a half hour's polite and deferential conversation with her.

"I know from my brother, the Oberförster," said the Geheimrathin, "that Herr von Stottenheim is a worldly, superficial man. And the candor and manliness of the young officer is not one whit worse than his comrade's policy."

"Yes, mamma," eagerly exclaimed Elizabeth, "he is both frank and manly; he might think differently upon religious subjects did he have some one to instruct him."

The much-criticised cuirassier now coolly passed the group of ladies, and again invited Fräulein Laura to dance. "He has the virtue of consistency at least," whispered Wina sharply. "It is

too absurd that he should act as he has done. Why, his conduct is absolutely ridiculed by his comrades. If only one could contrive some good excuse why Elizabeth should not dance the next set with him!"

"Sister, I pray you," interposed Paula apprehensively, "give no cause of offence to this dangerous man."

"Well," sighed Wina, "we have a short intermission in which to breathe. But I cannot understand the Bauers!"

Fran Kühneman's sisters-in-law were so excited that they failed to observe their chatter over the one theme was the source of great annoyance to the troubled woman. The much-admired Herr von Stottenheim was Elizabeth's next partner. "It will not require any effort to be dignified and reserved with this gentleman," was the young girl's reflection, "he is eminently a man of fashion. One will experience no difficulty in replying to his easy, frivolous questions." The courteous lieutenant after a time lighted upon a theme that he thought must interest his silent partner, and spoke of her grandfather, Herr von Budmar, in the most flattering terms.

"Yes," said Elizabeth, her attention at once arrested, "he was a cuirassier in the garrison at Braunhausen."

"And an ornament to the same," he returned with a courteous bow.

"He was a brave and a godly soldier," said Elizabeth, involuntarily.

"They are synonymous terms, Fräulein," replied Herr von Stottenheim with pathetic complaisance.

Elizabeth looked at him in amused surprise.

"Gracious Fräulein," he said, answering her smile, "beneath the warrior's rough exterior there lie hidden noble and tender emotions."

Elizabeth, unaccustomed to the cant of fashion, could scarcely repress a merry laugh as she listened to his easy, meaningless words. He continued to prattle on in a manner that he conceived would prove agreeable to a grandchild of the Herr von Budmar, whose religious character was widely known, until the quadrille began anew, and the conversation necessarily came to an end.

"Mamma," said Elizabeth, when she was seated beside her mother "you would have been amused could you have heard Herr von Stottenheim expatiate upon the excellent Herr von Budmar, and upon religious subjects in general. I quite enjoyed it—it was too amusing."

"He is a shrewd, politic man of the world, and can be all things to all men," returned the mother, warningly.

"Yes, he is a hypocrite," interposed Elizabeth, with emphasis, "and that is worse than a scoffer."

"You see, daughter, in what company we find ourselves," said her mother with a smile. "If you criticise thus ruthlessly all of your partners, you will not experience much pleasure."

Elizabeth nodded appreciatively, and whispered, "Mamma, I do not find my ideal here."

The mother smiled in sympathy. The words were a comfort to her, although she was aware that she could not rely upon the hasty conclusions of her impulsive young daughter.

The music recommenced, and Elizabeth could not help wondering if the angry cuirassier would claim her hand. "How disagreeable it will be for me if he should," she thought, "and if he answer me only in cold monosyllables.

The ladies had taken their places in the set, and still she waited; she noticed that Herr von Kadden was apparently absorbed in conversation with some gentleman who was unknown to her. Some few moments elapsed, when two persons stood before her, soliciting the favor of her hand, and immediately a grave consultation ensued between the two aunts, whether prudence would not prohibit their niece from accepting the courtesy.

"Herr von Kadden appears to have forgotten his engagement," said Wina aloud.

"I pray you be cautious," said Paula, imploringly. "Do not give occasion for strife with this man."

"He has certainly been very remiss," said the son of the house. "I will remind him of it."

Elizabeth urgently requested that he would not do so, when suddenly the missing officer stood in their midst, and, without any exchange of courtesies, gravely claimed the hand of his lady for the dance.

Herr von Bauer agreed with the aunts that the

cuirassier's conduct was markedly discourteous. Wina shrugged her shoulders significantly, and the timid Paula besought him to be cautious in his dealings with so dangerous a man.

The criticised pair were meanwhile whirling around to the strains of the orchestra. There was a pause, and Elizabeth stood silently near her partner, who, with grimly closed lips and clouded brow, preserved a frigid silence. "But this is an angry man!" thought Elizabeth; "he deserves his cognomen. How dare he be so discourteous to a lady!" The officer looked up and seemed as though he would have spoken, but could not.

It was an impossibility for her to remain thus silent at his side, or to enjoy dancing with so mute a partner; therefore, when the dance was over, she bowed with dignity as a signal that she wished to be escorted to her seat.

"I am ready to go home at any moment," said Elizabeth, when Herr von Kadden had withdrawn. "I have had enough of the ball."

"Etiquette requires that you dance with Herr von Bauer," urged Aunt Wina. "We will leave before the cotillion."

"Yes, yes," chimed in Paula; "it has been rather an unsatisfactory evening after all."

Wina's sharp glance silenced her sister. It had not been a pleasant evening for her, but policy prevented her from allowing it to be remarked. Other balls more enjoyable than this were sure to follow.

The next was a *contre-danse*, and Herr von

Bauer was Elizabeth's partner. There stood the silent officer with Fräulein Laura.

"What ill-nature!" interposed Wina, biting her lips in her vexation.

Frau von Bauer now smilingly approached the irate ladies. "Herr von Kadden is as eccentric as ever," she remarked. "He seeks to hide under the appearance of a jest the interest that he evidently feels in your charming niece, ladies."

"Do you not think that it is malice?" queried Paula earnestly.

"Malice! Malice and Herr von Kadden are not synonymous terms," said Frau von Bauer, emphatically. "He is impetuous and rash, as I am informed, but a clever, attractive man withal."

"Not agreeable characteristics," rejoined Wina, sharply.

Meanwhile Elizabeth danced as one in a dream. She was conscious that the dark blue eyes were regarding her steadfastly. Determined to regain her self-possession, she compelled herself to look at her partner, and thereupon encountered the grave, imploring gaze which the young lieutenant fixed upon her. She could endure her position no longer, and with a flush of embarrassment, sighed her relief when the dance came to an end.

Her father now approached the group, and the gay, expectant party of some hours previous were more than ready to leave, but their carriage had not yet arrived. The music recommenced. Suddenly Herr von Kadden stood before them and

claimed Elizabeth's hand for the promised cotillion. The mother courteously excused her daughter, saying that permission had not been given her for this dance, as it had not been their intention from the first to remain so late. The young man plead so urgently for only two tours, that Elizabeth's father, who was ignorant of the excitement and anger of his sisters, gave a ready consent. The young girl accompanied her partner with a light heart, although she would not confess it even to herself.

"I must dance with you once more," he said in a low voice. "Forgive me, Fräulein."

Elizabeth felt conscious that these words were prompted by genuine regret, but she was silent. She could not force herself to speak.

"As a token that I am forgiven," he said, "tell me that my conduct has been more than foolish."

"That would not do; I must protect myself," she smilingly returned. She could not but accord him her forgiveness. Her lovely expressive eyes seemed to him to have spoken volumes.

"It is all right now," said the cuirassier, drawing a sigh of relief, "that smile tells me that I am forgiven, and that you agree with me in thinking that my conduct has been worse than foolish."

"Not foolish," she rejoined, "you were angry."

"But the anger only lasted for a few moments," he said deprecatingly.

"Oh, no, much longer than that," she said correcting him.

"Yes, with shame I confess it; it was, however, partially because I was unable to speak. I have determined," he said, with a merry laugh, "to break that censured contract with my groom; but should the poor fellow complain of the cessation of the perquisites, you will have it upon your conscience, Fräulein."

"For every victory over your temper you must indemnify him doubly," cried Elizabeth, her beautiful eyes beaming with child-like glee.

"Yes, that will do," rejoined the cuirassier, "I will fulfill any condition that you impose upon me."

Elizabeth, with downcast eyes and a flush of embarrassment, shunned the glance that was directed toward her. Herr Kühneman now approached and announced that the carriage had come for them. Mechanically she followed her father. Her two aunts took up their positions defiantly upon either side of their niece, so that the bold soldier should have no opportunity to proffer his objectionable services. But as the party left the ante-room, there stood the irrepressible cuirassier upon the threshold, and bowed his adieus as ceremoniously as even critical Aunt Wina could desire.

The conversation was kept up by the two aunts, while mother and daughter sat silently opposite them, looking out meditatively into the night and its shadows. One image presented itself to them both, and was always accompanied by apprehension and doubt. It was a heavy thought to the

mother's heart that any one of these men whom they had met, distinguished and courted as many of them were, should ask the hand of her sweet young daughter in marriage. "She is beautiful," she thought, "vivacious and gay, qualities requisite for the woman of society. This miserable ball," she bitterly soliloquized, "so unsatisfying has it been that even my frivolous sisters-in-law have not enjoyed it. Why did I not at once decline to lead my daughter into such an assemblage? Our fashionable acquaintances might have looked upon my conduct as fanatical, but they would have forgotten all about it in a day, for this world is sadly superficial. This is an experience that will last me the balance of my life," reflected the mother, and a solemn vow was taken by the repentant woman during that long dark journey homeward.

Frau Kühneman was alone with her daughter in her room. Elizabeth had thrown off her wraps and walked to the mirror. She started back affrighted at the countenance reflected there. "Mamma," she exclaimed excitedly, "did I look like this at the ball?"

"Certainly," replied her mother unthinkingly.

Elizabeth took her hand and going with her to the mirror, said gravely, "Look, Mamma." And truly it was anything but a pleasing picture—dress and ribbons and flowers disarranged, curls disordered, and her young face white and wan.

"No, no, my child," said her mother, reassuringly, "the long, cold drive has made you look so

pale, your face was flushed at the ball. But away to bed; my little daughter will be herself again to-morrow."

Elizabeth, in answer, threw her arms around her mother's neck, and burying her face in her bosom, broke out suddenly into a torrent of tears.

"My dear child," said her mother soothingly, while a sharp pang penetrated her heart, "you are unnerved and worn out; you have been dancing too much, and the hour is late."

"I will never go to another ball," sobbed Elizabeth.

"I will never take you to another," said her mother, with deep emotion.

After a tender caress, mother and daughter separated for the night, and Elizabeth was soon sleeping the sweet sleep of youth.

CHAPTER VIII.

ELIZABETH slept late upon the morning following the ball, notwithstanding which she rose feeling languid and unrefreshed. Aunts Wina and Paula called, with sympathizing inquiries after the health of their dear niece, and plunged at once into an exhaustive rehearsal of the incidents of the preceding evening, contrary to the expressed wishes of their depressed sister-in-law. Elizabeth laughed merrily over the eccentricities of Herr von Kadden and of his singular choice of a partner, and jestingly inquired of Aunt Paula if she had heard anything yet regarding the anticipated duel. Wina, as usual, embraced this opportunity to offer her niece a word of advice, and eagerly began, "My dear Elizabeth, the next time you go to a ball—"

"I pray you, dear aunt," interposed Elizabeth, hastily, "do not trouble yourself about that. My mind is made up; I will never go to another ball."

At this opportune moment, Herr von Bauer and his cousin, Herr von Stottenheim, were announced. Frau Kühneman was annoyed beyond measure by this call; but had not her daughter been introduced into society, and was it not only permissible, but courteous, for the gentlemen to inquire after the health of their partner of the preceding evening?

Excusing herself, the Geheimerathin hastened to her husband's study and entreated his assistance in entertaining the unwelcome guests, whose advent she announced with many a plaint and deep-drawn sigh. "My wife," returned her husband, with an indulgent smile, "know you not that one step naturally follows another? This state of excitement will not last forever," he added, soothingly; "we have learned our lesson, and we will be the wiser next time."

Somewhat quieted, Frau Kühneman accompanied her husband to the drawing-room, where they found Aunt Paula busily engaged catechising Herr von Stottenheim, who good-humoredly submitted to the infliction. To the inquiry as to when he expected to return to the garrison, he replied that although his furlough extended until evening, he had determined to leave during the afternoon. To this declaration he added a graphic description of one of his comrades who after the close of the ball had roamed round the park for upwards of four hours, and whom he had left sleeping as heavily as a bear in winter. "We will not attempt to arouse Herr von Kadden," he said with a significant shrug of the shoulders; "we will leave him to his fate. My motto is, 'Let sleeping dogs lie.'"

Paula and Wina could no longer refrain, but excitedly and simultaneously unburdened their minds regarding this singular young man, and their surprise that Frau von Bauer would include such a one among her guests. Herr von Stottenheim re-

turned by way of explanation that his uncle had commissioned him to extend an invitation to a few of the most graceful dancers among the officers of the garrison, and as Kadden was pre-eminently the best, he had invited the young man to be present. "It was truly providential that I did so," he laughingly added, "else Fräulein Laura would not have figured so prominently in the festivities of the evening." The Geheimerath, innocent of the feelings of his sisters upon the subject, listened with amused interest to the officer's description of Herr von Kadden's singularities, but the two irate ladies said that nothing whatever could convince them to the contrary but that his conduct had been premeditated, and was unworthy of an officer and a gentleman. Stottenheim defended his absent comrade zealously, and laughingly asserted that to his certain knowledge, his friend's course of conduct had been induced by magnanimity of the most disinterested kind, and that it was a chivalrous spirit which had prompted this brave knight to invite so forlorn and forsaken a damsel as Fräulein Laura to be his partner in so many dances.

Stottenheim, flattered by the interest that his recital had excited, now entered into a rehearsal of the more personal traits of his comrade, praising in unmeasured terms his accomplishments as a broadsword man and his incomparable and fearless horsemanship. "No horse is too wild for him to mount," he asserted, "he can control the most

vicious animal, but he is reckless in the extreme. How he has ever escaped a broken neck is a source of wonder to all the officers of the garrison."

Mother and daughter listened in silence. The Geheimerath thought the qualities enumerated by Stottenheim altogether consistent with the *tout ensemble* of the true soldier. After some discursive conversation, the gentlemen and the maiden aunts withdrew.

Elizabeth was now alone in the drawing room. In unwonted nervous restlessness she attempted various kinds of employment, but each in turn was quickly thrown aside. Whatever she engaged in, were it needle-work, book or music, one image was ever at her side; she felt for the first time in her young life "the half-remote presence of a world of love and beauty and delight, made up of vague, mingled images from all the poetry and romance she had ever read or had even woven in her dreamy reveries." Rousing herself with an effort, she hurried to her room, and lying down, resolutely closed her eyes and tried to rest, but sleep came not with the wooing of it. The image would not vanish from her sight. Rising suddenly and determinedly, she took up her discarded needle-work, and for a short time occupied herself with it; but the tall imposing form and the proud and earnest dark-blue eyes, which had looked so tenderly into hers upon the preceeding evening, could not be banished. For a long time she sat, in a deep reverie, too weak for resistance. Again she rose reso-

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lutely, and rousing her latent will, shook off her languor. Gathering up her embroidery, she went into the nursery, where she not only sewed diligently, but also made merry with the children, who hailed the advent of their elder sister in their midst with every demonstration of delight. The mother, hearing her joyous laugh, smiled again contentedly as she listened.

True to her resolve, Elizabeth succeeded in throwing off the lassitude which environed her, and after luncheon started out for a long stroll. Walking briskly through several streets, she at length reached her destined goal, the home of her English teacher. It was located in a retired part of the city, "where the rush and roar of the human tide was not audible," where the houses were dingy and the shops small. Few persons upon pleasure bent, traversed this secluded street, and fashionable equipages were unknown. Children in plenty, however, swarmed and played in its dusty, dirty courts. Stepping through a gateway into a narrow passage, whose darkness was only made more manifest through the indistinct flickerings of one feeble little oil lamp, she pulled the bell and was admitted. "Were I compelled to live in so narrow and contracted a world," the young girl reflected, "it would break my heart."

Her English teacher was a maiden lady, upon the verge of middle life; neither kith nor kin had she in this strange land. She had occupied the position of governess for many years in various

households, and necessarily had led an isolated life. "Patiently and silently she had suffered, as working women must, and year by year she had slowly accumulated a provision for old age, with the pathetic prudence of a woman who knows well that only her own labor stands between her and dependence." She resided in a part of the city where rents were low. The houses were occupied by the respectable poor, whom neither business nor inclination prompted to congregate in the active and more animated thoroughfares of the city. Her little dwelling was comfortably and even prettily furnished with rugs, books, pictures, and many beautiful plants, mostly gifts from her former pupils. Hers was essentially a religious nature; for this lonely governess solitude had no terrors; her life was hid with Christ in God. "The kingdom of God is within you, saith the Lord; it is peace and joy."

Elizabeth reached her destination before the lesson hour, and consequently the rest of the pupils had not arrived. The young girl loved the lonely Englishwoman, and her love was reciprocated; but it was rather a sad kind of affection, as she knew it could be only temporary.

After the customary salutations had been exchanged, the teacher's alert and critical eye, sharpened by affection, soon discovered that her sprightly pupil was unwontedly silent and abstracted. "Why are you so thoughtful this afternoon, Elizabeth?" she kindly inquired.

"Shall I tell you?" returned the young girl, hesitatingly and with heightened color. "As I entered the dark, narrow passage, Fräulein, which leads to your room, and thought of your lonely life, it seemed joyless and unsatisfactory; but as I look at your smiling, peaceful face, I am conscious that it is not so to you, I cannot understand how you can be so content with such barren and loveless surroundings. I feel ashamed of myself and of my discontent, with apparently a far happier lot."

"My dear child," returned the teacher with a pathetic smile, "you may think that the statement I am about to make is visionary and fanatical in the extreme; but I assure you that words fail me to describe the content, yes more than content—joy—that I experience within these humble walls. I would not exchange my present condition for that of the most fortunate at the very outset of life. My bark is anchored in a secure haven; no earthly storm has power to wreck it. I only await a peaceful death, 'in that day which is known unto my Lord. And it shall be neither day nor night, such as now is, but everlasting light, infinite brightness, steadfast peace, and secure rest forever, in one of the blessed mansions of the city which is above.'"

The entrance of the other pupils interrupted the conversation, and the lesson was begun. To Elizabeth's preoccupied mind it soon became tiresome; dreamily she gazed out of the window upon the lonesome street, and the grey clouded sky. Then

her wandering eyes rested on a pale, sad little figure framed in the opposite doorway, clad in a well worn black velvet jacket, who stood holding a small dog in her arms, her chilled hands bundled up in the folds of her apron. "There is far more wretchedness in this world than happiness," mused Elizabeth, as she slowly withdrew her gaze. She heaved a sigh of relief, as she espied her brother Fritz, whom her mother had sent to accompany her home. Hurriedly throwing on her wraps, she left before the rest of her companions.

"See, Fritz," said Elizabeth, with a shudder, "how desolate this street is in the dusk and the fog and the dirt. The very houses have a weird-like look. I feel homesick in this uncertain light."

"That is only because you have no acquaintances in this part of the city," coolly replied her practical brother.

Quickly and silently they walked, when through the fog, at some little distance, they saw approaching them a tall, imposing figure, wrapped in a military cloak, with a white cap drawn closely over his forehead. Elizabeth started, then reproached herself with fancying that in every soldier she could see but the one who filled her mental vision. Looking up as he drew near, she encountered Herr von Kadden's astonished gaze. He hesitated, paused, then suddenly his dark, grave face lightened as though a sunbeam had fallen across it. Instinctively, for one moment, they gazed into

each other's faces, unconscious of appearances. Elizabeth was the first to recover herself, and would have passed with a simple greeting, but this was an impossibility on Herr von Kadden's part.

"How do I happen to meet you here, Fräulein?" he asked, in surprise.

"This is my English hour," said Elizabeth, promptly.

Turning, the young officer walked deliberately by her side. "I have been hunting up an old aunt of mine," he began, by way of explanation, "who lives in this wretched street. I felt so lonely this afternoon that the hotel became intolerable to me. I actually thirsted for some human soul upon whose sympathy I had some claim. And what do you think, Fräulein," he continued, with an undertone of sadness in his deep, rich voice, "when I had poured out my plaint, my old aunt answered me thus: 'Yes, in former days, I too felt that same sense of loneliness. Custom, however, will soon deaden this feeling. I have no near relative to love me, but I am not without company. Life would be monotonous and dreary indeed, were I entirely alone. But I very much doubt if any one else would care for the companionship of my friends, who are nevertheless the sole creatures upon earth who sincerely love me.' This assertion was truly pathetic, coming from a heart so forlorn and aged as hers. Her voice was tremulous with emotion as she said: 'I have these three dear dogs. Come here, Diana, and you,

sweet Joli,' she said, caressingly. 'You don't know who this is, do you?' 'Otto,' she continued, 'when I die, I will bequeath to you this intelligent, affectionate creature. He would grieve himself to death if he were left in this cold world without loving care. Diana and Bella I hope to outlive.' I could stay no longer. Think of becoming habituated to such companionship—of the torpor of her bleak, desolate life! Hurriedly I sought the street. I felt stifled. I cannot describe to you the effect," he said, with a perceptible shiver, "that this revelation had upon me." The young man's face, as he spoke, was strangely grave and sad. "And although the very houses look cold and uncanny in this spectral light," he added, "a pleasant sense of warmth now pervades my being, and the street seems no longer dull and lonesome."

"Elizabeth made the same remark a few minutes since," interposed the practical Fritz, "but I cannot see that the street or the houses are in fault, dingy as they are. It is we who are to blame; the fault lies within."

Elizabeth, embarrassed by this reference to herself, began hurriedly, to cover her confusion. "No, it does not lie in the houses nor in the street; and, besides, not only do old ladies live here who take comfort and pleasure in the companionship of their dogs, but my English teacher resides in this street, and she is so happy and contented with her lot that she would not exchange it for another that we would consider more fortunate."

"Does she live alone?" asked the young man sympathetically.

"Quite alone," replied Elizabeth; "the few kindred that she has reside in England; but then she is a Christian," she added in a low, hesitating tone.

"She is a Christian," repeated her companion softly.

Elizabeth regarded him intently. His eyes were bent upon the ground, he looked sad and grave, the long, dark lashes threw deep shadows under the half closed lids; she noticed the extreme pallor of the young man's face. "Are you sick?" she involuntarily asked.

"No, not now," he returned, speaking with apparent effort; then raising his great dark eyes he gazed wistfully into the face of his interrogator.

"Do you return to the garrison this evening?" she asked confusedly, blushing under his direct gaze.

"Yes, my furlough expires to-night," was his answer.

"Herr von Stottenheim told us this morning that you were a reckless horseman," said Elizabeth timidly.

"My horse and I are good friends, Fräulein; we know no fear," he replied with a smile.

"You may rely too much on your horsemanship, remember," she said, attempting to speak lightly. "We are told that the horse is a vain thing for safety."

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"These are frightfully unwholesome thoughts, Fräulein," returned the young man, with a repellent gesture.

"For this season of gloom we need a faith that will buoy us above all outward conditions of life," continued the young girl, "a faith 'that in cloud or in sunshine, in life or in the hour and trial of death, will yield us solid peace.' 'Man cannot face life without some shield, and no other shield than God can defend him.'"

Herr von Kadden gazed admiringly upon Elizabeth's lovely, earnest face, but one could nevertheless detect the faintest glimmer of a mocking smile playing about his lips. "You are fond of weaving fairy tales, Fräulein," he returned, jestingly. "I, too, have read of golden castles, beautiful princesses, magic wands and enchanted gardens. We are no longer children waiting to be amused. The world has outgrown the age of fable. With every desire to respect your beautiful faith, I cannot accept it."

Elizabeth was silent. They now turned into a busy, crowded thoroughfare, and could no longer walk three abreast. Fritz sauntered on before and thoughtlessly allowed his sister to follow after, accompanied by her tall escort.

As they walked in silence side by side, Elizabeth felt as though she must seize a faint chance of rescuing her companion from some indefinable danger. "He may be killed to-night on his journey to Braunhausen," she thought, "and he is

without faith, without preparation, without prayer. I must advise him." Her mind was troubled with self-reproach that she could not speak to him as she ought.

It seemed to her as though he had divined her thoughts, for with quick comprehension he said, suddenly breaking the silence, "How dense the fog has grown; the very lights are indistinct."

Elizabeth attempted to speak unconcernedly. "Yes," she returned, "it is quite dark. To-night it will be dark as pitch, a rare opportunity for an accident."

"I feel fully able to take care of myself," he rejoined, smilingly; "but if it please you, Fräulein, I will ride so cautiously that my good steed will not recognize his rider, and my groom will fancy that the spirit of the mist has transformed his fearless master into some cowardly changeling. And he will be right; I *am* changed. This day the glamour of fairy-land hangs about me," he added, with a smile that gave to his features a singular softness and beauty.

Elizabeth, to cover her embarrassment, said hastily, "It has become quite dark. Pardon me, Herr von Kadden, but I have a purchase to make in this shop."

"Will you not wish me *bon voyage*?" he said, in a low tone.

Elizabeth would have answered jestingly, but she could not. Instinctively he put out his hand, but as he saw that she hesitatingly extended the

tips of her fingers, he drew himself up to his full height, and bowing his adieus moved abruptly away.

"We must go into this shop, Fritz," said Elizabeth to her brother; "I could not get him to leave us in any other way."

"What made you want to get rid of him?" asked Fritz, curiously.

"It was not in good form," said his sister, briefly.

"I saw Herr von Bauer this morning walking with Fräulein von Weddel," rejoined the irrepressible Fritz.

"Only think, if Aunt Wina or Aunt Paula had seen me escorted through the streets of Berlin by this 'dangerous man,'" said Elizabeth, laughing nervously.

"I do not think him so very dangerous," said Fritz; "that he is not a Christian is a great pity. Most likely his heterodox views are only the fault of his education."

Brother and sister, each deeply absorbed in thought, walked on together in silence until they reached their home.

CHAPTER IX.

SEVERAL weeks had elapsed since the events related in the preceding chapter, when one clear, frosty morning in the month of January, the Geheimerath Kühneman, accompanied by his wife and children, set out for the railway station. Karl, the practical genius of the household, had preceded them in a drosky which conveyed the luggage. The little ones chattered gayly and incessantly during their brisk walk; numerous and loving were the messages which they commissioned Elizabeth to deliver to the occupants of the dear old home at Woltheim. She listened patiently to their artless prattle, until she and her mother had taken their seats in the railway coach, from which she still continued, to their delight, to converse with them in pantomime until she was whirled from their sight.

During the greater part of the way mother and daughter sat in silence. Frau Kühneman was weary and unnerved by the demands made upon her by the preparations for the journey, but at the same time felt a decided sense of relief that Elizabeth would be for a time removed from the prejudicial influence which her kind but frivolous aunts exerted upon her. She was also comforted by the thought that her young daughter was happy in

anticipation of the rest that she would experience in the tranquil ancestral home, afar from the maddening crowd of gay Berlin.

The young girl sat meanwhile absorbed in dreamy reverie; the shuttle of youthful fancy sped rapidly to and fro, weaving in brilliant coloring the ideal life that she would lead in the pleasant rural home whither she was going. Ever and anon upon the tapestry would emerge a tall, imposing figure, whose dark, earnest eyes looked tenderly into hers. Her heart thrilled with the glance that her imagination had conjured up, and she felt that "life was indeed revealing to her a beautiful world that had hitherto been unknown."

At the same time that the travelers were approaching the terminus of their journey, the coachman had started from Woltheim with the barouche drawn by the old gray horses, and was moving slowly in the direction of Braunhausen. Notwithstanding both carriage and horses looked somewhat antiquated, there was an unquestionable air of stateliness in their appearance. As the measured trot of the familiar grays was heard, the inhabitants of the adjacent villages would say with deferential respect, "There goes the gracious Herr von Woltheim," and at the railway station the Landrath's barouche attracted by far more respectful attention than the more modern and elegant equipages of the neighboring gentry.

As the lumbering vehicle rolled slowly along the road, a horseman dashed suddenly into sight, and drawing rein, abruptly accosted the coachman:

"Are you on your way to the railway station?"

Frederick, who had no difficulty in bringing his startled horses to a halt, replied in the affirmative, giving at the same time a military salute to the Lieutenant.

"Whom are you expecting by train?" he further queried.

"The Frau Geheimerathin and the Fräulein Elizabeth," was his answer.

Drawing out his watch, the young officer said hurriedly, "The train is due in half an hour; you will be late."

"Yes, yes, you are right," calmly responded the old man, and in a moment the fiery chestnut darted along the high road like a flash, while the staid sober grays trotted circumspectly on their way to the station.

"An active fellow!" chuckled the old cuirassier, looking admiringly after the young officer, who sat upon his mettlesome steed as firm as though carved out of granite. "When I was young I too could ride, but old age and a soldier's life do not agree. I may not be on time, as he said, but at all events I can be depended upon to be there. The more haste the less speed, say I."

As the train drew up to the station, Elizabeth and her mother looked in all directions for the old barouche, but it was not within sight. They however saw a horseman fly madly past. As the shrill whistle of the locomotive pierced the air, his horse reared and for one moment stood bolt upright.

The rider kept his seat, and by a single movement controlled his startled steed. Springing lightly from the saddle, and throwing the reins to a workman who was standing near, he hastened to proffer his help to the ladies.

Our travelers had been silent spectators of the incident, and Frau Kühneman's heart sank within her as she took in the situation. She felt as though she had been blind, but now saw clearly. Herr von Kadden here! Did this account for Elizabeth's joy at leaving Berlin? For the first anxious moment she feared that this meeting had been pre-arranged; her mind was filled with apprehensions to which she could not give shape. One scrutinizing look she cast upon her daughter, but with a deep sense of relief she could detect no cause for uneasiness; her manner was perfectly guileless and natural, and her surprise too unmistakably genuine to suspect that the young Lieutenant's presence at the railway station was other than a mere coincidence.

As the guard opened the door, the young man stood ready to assist the ladies to alight. His cheeks were glowing from exercise in the frosty air, his eyes sparkling, his whole countenance joyful with the radiance of hope. The mother's heart could not but sympathize with his manifest pleasure, and she returned his greeting with a warmth that was more than merely polite.

"I come to tell you that your carriage will not be here for at least thirty minutes," he said, respectfully.

"How did you find that out?" Frau Kühneman smilingly asked.

"I passed the Landrath's barouche upon my way hither," he responded, frankly. "It is familiar to all of the soldiers; it halts frequently in the neighborhood of the garrison while the men are drilling."

"Our old coachman was a cuirassier," said the Geheimerathin by way of explanation, "and he still feels that he belongs to the profession."

The mother had some little hesitation about availing herself of the young officer's proffered assistance in relieving them of their luggage, but wisely concluded to accord him the desired privilege. After her first embarrassment, Elizabeth regained her composure, comporting herself with ease and dignity. The young man evidently felt that he was trespassing rather unwarrantably for a stranger, and cast an appealing glance upon Elizabeth that seemed to express his confidence in her sympathy. She did not however respond to the look, but turning toward the beautiful steed, she inquired if that was the horse that carried him safely to the garrison upon that dark, foggy night in November.

He answered affirmatively, and added, "I have been in Berlin three times since then. You do not take your English lesson at the same hour, Fräulein?"

"Not for some while," returned Elizabeth, without raising her eyes. "I have given up my Eng-

lish lessons for the winter, and I go only occasionally to visit my teacher."

Upon entering the waiting room, Frau Kühneman exchanged greetings with the well known station mistress, and as was customary, ordered some coffee. The woman had a scrupulous regard for her distinguished guests, and placed at their command the best accommodations that her contracted quarters would afford. The mother keenly regarded the young Lieutenant as he stood opposite her near one of the windows. She shrank from allowing her daughter familiar intercourse with this comparative stranger, but was too discreet and sensible a woman not to submit gracefully to circumstances over which she could have no control; she accordingly shook off her meditative mood, and embraced the opportunity to see of what stuff the young man was made. Naturally they fell into conversation on Braunhausen and its neighborhood. The Geheimerathin made inquiry about several families with whose members she was familiar. The officer responded frankly and freely to all her questions; he acknowledged that he had made but few acquaintances in the town or vicinity, but by way of explanation said that he had been in the garrison only a short time, "and indeed," he added with a grave smile, "the kind of society attainable at Braunhausen I do not think desirable. Thus far I have found it ordinary and tiresome in the extreme. And as for the Landrath," he began—then checking himself, blushed in

painful embarrassment. The Geheimerathin could not repress a smile at the young man's confusion. "The Landrath," he continued, courageously concluding his rather unfortunate sentence, "is a Pietist, but notwithstanding his religious views, he is universally respected as a noble, upright man." After a short silence, the young man said eagerly that he had lately understood from mutual friends that Herr Von Budmar had been formerly a Cuirassier in the same regiment as his own, and as this was a bond between them, he hoped to make his acquaintance before long.

"Even here !" sighed the mother, as she thought of Elizabeth.

"It will be a great pleasure for me," said the young man warmly, "to obtain a glimpse of the interior life in an ancestral home. I am a homeless man," he added, as a momentary expression of pain crossed his face, "isolated from family ties; in very truth, a son of the regiment."

Frau Kühneman, in spite of her apprehensions, listened to the young man with interest, and kindly responded, "It is sad to be without home attachments; 'the human life should be well rooted in some spot of a native land where it may get the love of tender kinship for the face of earth.' An old family home is full of rich reminiscences and varied experiences."

She then inquired if his parents were living.

He informed her that they died when he was but a child, and that upon their decease he had

resided with his grandfather, an old soldier, until he entered the military school. "My only sister was placed in a boarding school, on the death of my parents; she is married to an officer, and living on the Rhine. I even envy my groom," he said with a sigh, "who is constantly boasting of his native village and his host of relatives."

"Home and a large family circle is a rich inheritance," responded Frau Kühneman, looking at the speaker with quickened interest.

"One circumstance lately has been a great source of pleasure to me," continued the young man, warming with his subject, and gratified by the interest evinced in his recital. "Last year, upon attaining my majority, my guardian sent me an antique walnut chest which my grandfather by a provision of his will bequeathed to me. At his death accordingly it passed into my possession, and in spite of my guardian's protest that the charges of transportation would cost more than the chest was worth, it was sent to me. It is an heir-loom; within the chest lies a quantity of table-linen spun by the hand of my great-grandmother, some valuable books, an illuminated Bible with family record attached, letters and various memorials of my parents, particularly of my mother. This chest is the favorite piece of furniture in my room, although my comrades crack many a joke over it at my expense. At times, when the sense of loneliness presses heavily upon me, I sit before this old heir-loom and try to realize that thus doubtless

sat also members of my own family in the far-off times, and I can almost fancy as I raise the lid and gaze upon my treasures, 'that the fragrance of their experiences still lingers about them as a dried rose-bud scents the drawer where it has withered and perished.'"

"A family chronicle is a treasure," said Elizabeth, "and its value is enhanced by being written in the old Bible."

"Yes, for centuries each branch of the family has been recorded in an unbroken succession. My name is the last. My grandfather has written a verse upon one of the blank leaves of the Bible," he added. "I do not remember the words, but it is significant."

At this moment Frederick and the old grays drove slowly up to the station. Elizabeth ran out of the waiting room to greet them.

"Here we are at last, Fräulein," he said, as he respectfully took off his hat to the young lady. "Better late than never. Begging the gracious Frau's permission, I will feed my horses before we trot back to Woltheim."

"You must have a cup of hot coffee before you go," said Elizabeth.

The old man bowed and smiled his gratification at this proposal.

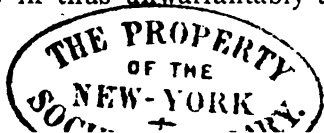
The young girl ran back to the waiting room, and taking some bread from the table, quickly returned and had commenced feeding the old greys, when the workman came up leading the officer's steed.

"Whose horse is first in the field?" queried Frederick with sly humor. The man only smiled an answer.

"Will he eat bread?" asked Elizabeth shyly, holding at the same time a dainty morsel toward the eager animal. "Yes," she cried with child-like pleasure, "he is glad to get it."

The Lieutenant now made his appearance; throwing one arm over the neck of his horse, he stood leaning carelessly against the beautiful animal, and watched with pleasure the young girl as she alternately fed the horses.

The mother stood at the window a silent and troubled witness. In spite of her doubts and misgivings, her eyes rested admiringly upon the handsome pair. Elizabeth was clad in a rich, dark woolen dress. Upon leaving the waiting room she had hastily substituted for a wrap a large, blue scarf, crossing it over her bosom and gracefully knotting the ends in the back. Her lovely countenance glowed with animation, and the deep blush which burned on her cheeks lent double radiance to her luminous eyes. The young Lieutenant's erect, slender form was habited in a dark top-coat which imparted to his appearance a more manly and soldier-like bearing than the evening dress in which the Geheimerathin had seen him at the ball. His countenance at that moment was earnest even to gravity. His was a thoroughly chivalrous nature, and he felt a sense of blameworthiness in thus unwarrantably thrusting him-



self upon the notice of two unattended ladies. He entertained also a vague misgiving that Frau Kühneman disapproved of his advances.

Elizabeth sedulously averted her gaze, and accosting the coachman asked: "Which of the horses do you consider the most gentle, Frederick?"

"They are equally gentle," responded the old man; then after a moment's reflection he added, "Ypsilanti is perhaps the quieter of the two."

"As a lady's horse he doubtless would be," continued Elizabeth.

"A lady's horse? A what?" repeated Frederick with a comical gesture of dismay. "To be sure he has an easy trot," he added with sly humor.

"Can he not gallop?" asked Elizabeth.

"No, his galloping days are over, Fräulein."

"Well, at all events we will try him with a side-saddle," said Elizabeth promptly.

"Side-saddle?" repeated the old groom in accents of terror. "Oh! no, you must give that up, gracious Fräulein; it will never do."

"Riding is one of the pleasures of a country life. I have looked forward to it," said Elizabeth, with heightened color, conscious of Herr von Kadden's look of amusement. "I intend to wear grandmamma's steel-green riding habit, and I will ride Ypsilanti," she added.

"The gracious Frau von Woltheim was a graceful and fearless horsewoman in her day," said Frederick.

"And grandmamma still has the livery that you used to wear when you accompanied her upon her rides."

"Yes, it is still in existence," responded the groom with a hearty laugh. "When I wore that suit I was a slender youth. I have grown somewhat in breadth since then, Fräulein," he said deprecatingly. "The horses and the groom have grown old together."

Elizabeth slowly turned her head, casting a shy, disconcerted glance upon the young Lieutenant, who stood an amused listener to the foregoing discussion. He bit his lips, and did his best to preserve his gravity, but he could not suppress the fun which sparkled in his dark eyes. Elizabeth was keenly conscious of his amusement. She could not conceal her annoyance, and said, petulantly "Why do you look so satirical? I do not see what there is to laugh at. What is there to prevent my riding Ypsilanti?"

After a moment's provokingly quiet consideration, the young man said, "I regret that *my* horse is not broken for a side-saddle, Fräulein."

"You are much mistaken if you think I would ride such a wild animal," said Elizabeth, turning away abruptly.

Frau Kühneman now made her appearance. After a short consultation with Frederick, she proposed that as the horses would not be ready to start for some time, and the weather was pleasant, they should walk for some little distance upon their way,

and let the carriage overtake them. Elizabeth, delighted with the proposition, would have set out immediately, but her mother checked her with a smile, saying, "Are you going without your hat and wrap, my child?"

The young officer did not await permission, but sprang into the waiting room, and quickly returned with the missing articles. Proffering his aid in helping Elizabeth on with her mantle, he hoped for at least one appreciative look in return; but with carefully averted face, she thanked him with cool politeness.

A shadow flitted across the young man's countenance. "It is sheer folly," he thought. "I am a fool for my pains. I may as well retreat, and give up the field. My old chest has more sympathy for me than has this maiden's cold heart."

Elizabeth, keenly conscious of his feelings, saw him seize the reins with nervous haste. Involuntarily she looked up and met the gaze of the blue eyes as they rested darkly upon her. With faltering voice she said, "You would not then advise me to ride Ypsilanti?"

"I would not," he answered curtly; he found it a hard task to overcome his wounded pride. "I have been most unfortunate, Fräulein, to have unintentionally offended you," he added.

Frau Kühneman drawing near silently awaited the Lieutenant's departure.

Drawing a deep breath, with an apologetic air and a vivid blush, the young man asked if he

might be permitted to accompany them upon their walk. Frau Kühneman would gladly have declined the proposition but courtesy forbade, and she gave a reluctant assent. Soon mother and daughter, accompanied by the Lieutenant, turned into a foot path which led through a beautiful fir wood.

"It is like fairy land here," said the Geheime-rathin. "The stillness is so restful. How widely different this wood is from the artificial parks in Berlin."

"I feel," said Elizabeth, "as though we had been magically transported from the dusty, noisy city into this cool sequestered spot. It is a real joy to breathe this fragrant air. And look!" she exclaimed, "what lovely moss beneath this old fir tree!" Stooping, she began to pluck the graceful clinging sprays.

The young officer volunteered his aid, and soon like two happy children they vied with each other in the gathering. Their merry, unrestrained laughter rang out joyously through the solemn stillness of the dark firwood. Von Kadden presented to Elizabeth the moss which he had plucked, and at the same time, with an entreating look, touched lightly the pretty green sprays in her hand. The young girl hesitated, blushed, then permitted him to take possession of the coveted treasure, and in a moment the moss was transferred to the breast pocket of the officer's uniform.

Feeling conscious that Elizabeth was not wholly

indifferent to him the young man felt as though he had been suddenly raised from the depths of despair to the heights of hope. Jestingly he referred to her discussion with the old coachmen, laughing long and merrily over Frederick's comical dismay at the idea of a side saddle upon Ypsilanti. Elizabeth turned from him in half petulant displeasure, but he was no whit daunted. Had he not her gift in his breast-pocket?

And now the pedestrians heard the old grays' measured trot ; all too soon the barouche hove in sight. After assisting the ladies into the carriage, the happy Lieutenant hurried back with a light heart to the railway station, and in a few minutes dashed by, greeting them as he passed.

CHAPTER X.

FRAU KUHNEMAN remained at Woltheim several days, then departed for Berlin, leaving Elizabeth under the care of her grandmother, of whose wisdom and tenderness she was well assured. Before her departure she confidentially communicated to her mother her fears and anxieties regarding the young Lieutenant, and succeeded in obtaining her promise that she would endeavor to discover if any secret inclination for Herr von Kadden was lurking within her fair young charge's heart. With the insight upon which she prided herself, Frau von Budmar feared no difficulty in fathoming so transparent a nature as Elizabeth's. It requires intuitive sympathies to solve the mysteries of a young girl's nature, and Frau Kühneman although an admirable instructor and counsellor for her children, had never been the repository of their childish fancies and pleasures, nor had her elder daughter in later years made her the confidant into whose sympathetic ear she could pour out the secret emotions of her heart. On the contrary, there was something very beautiful in the relation that had grown up between Elizabeth and her grandmother. The mother could not but feel pained at her daughter's reticence, and vainly sought to excuse both herself and it by saying,

"Elizabeth has spent so much of her time at Woltheim, it is quite natural that she should feel freer and more inclined to talk confidentially to her grandmother than to myself. I have so many children and so many cares."

The mother returned to Berlin with an anxious heart, while her daughter on the contrary from the time that she entered the tranquil home at Woltheim found the sunny days still brighter. Her dancing feet and her singing voice echoed and re-echoed as she tripped hither and thither through the lofty rooms of the old mansion. "Such was the gush and play of her spirits that she was seldom perfectly quiet, any more than a fountain ever ceases to dimple and warble with its flow." Her warm, affectionate heart and her buoyant spirits gained her the love of every one that came within the sphere of her influence. She was in danger of being spoiled, for the entire household succumbed, and from uncle Charles to Anton, the stable boy, became her willing and obedient subjects. The grandmother watched her fair charge closely, but could not satisfy herself that Elizabeth's symptoms indicated any feeling other than that a young girl might naturally feel for her first admirer. Her state at present seemed very promising, and the delighted and partial grandparents gladly consigned the cuirassier Lieutenant and his objectionable attentions to oblivion. Elizabeth's life was so "completely filled with country occupations and pleasures that she had neither time nor

inclination to indulge in dreamy reverie," or in still more hurtful fancies. The home at Woltheim was the very locality in which "to foster and ripen all youthful, fresh and thoroughly wholesome sentiments" and, it failed not to exert an invigorating influence upon the young girl's life.

Upon awakening one morning, some days after her mother's departure for Berlin, Elizabeth found that a heavy snow had fallen. The day was cold and foggy; about noon the sun came forth at first with but a faint glow, then penetrating the mists that swept across his face, there was revealed a marvelous transfiguration. Twig and branch and shrub were laden with its sparkling casing, and "flashed back his rays until all nature glowed and burned."

Herr Budmar and his wife stood by the open window enchanted by the dazzling splendor of the scene. The sparkling trees and bushes "took on a thousand shapes capricious. No powers of art the pencil or the pen, could trace this glimpse of glory infinite." At the sound of the opening window, a flock of dainty crested larks and yellow-hammers came skimming and fluttering through the air, flitting lightly from spray to spray, then alighting upon the pure white snow. The little creatures hopped merrily about, pecking here and there at the transparent flowerets, but evidently upon the *qui vive* for something better. Frau Budmar strewed with lavish beneficence the seed that she ever kept in store. It seemed greatly to

the taste of the "feathered people" below, and with child-like joy she watched the voracious creatures as they "eyed and fought and fed upon the scattered grain." Her husband stood by her side and gazed with admiring love upon the still beautiful face and bright eyes that had charmed him in his youth, and which in these later years still constituted his very heart's delight.

The merry tinkle of sleigh bells now "fell at intervals upon the ear, and loud again and louder still it sounded." "I verily believe," said Herr Budmar with a hearty laugh, "that the sprite Elizabeth has prevailed upon Frederick to have the sleigh brought out." Soon the old gate which led from the court yard into the garden creaked loudly upon its rusty hinges, and Ypsilanti's broad white back emerged, jauntily decorated with a bright red velvet bell-harness. Upon the front seat dressed in an elaborate driving costume sat Elizabeth, a rich robe thrown with studied grace about her. In the rear sat Frederick's factotum, Anton, the stable boy, habited in top boots, high hat, and the leather colored livery which had done good service in the old groom's youth. He was armed with a mighty whip, which ever and anon he cracked with zealous vigor in strict accordance with his duty. Elizabeth held the reins, and with the triumphant air of a conqueror drove slowly past the window, so that no whit of her splendor should fail of impressing her admiring and amused spectators.

"Your turnout is royal in its magnificence," cried Frau Budmar with an indulgent smile. "Braunhausen will be upon the *qui vive* to discover what noble guest Woltheim is entertaining."

Elizabeth smiled her self-satisfaction and informed her grandmother that she intended taking her cousins at the Oberförsterei for a drive. It was not the first time that she had held the reins, and her grandfather after giving her some few directions, saw her without uneasiness drive through the gateway to the road that led past the old forest home.

A tumultuous shout of applause greeted her arrival at her Aunt Julchen's. The household, a numerous company, gathered admiringly around the stylish equipage, and the children in silent awe took their places near their beautiful, dashing, Berlin cousin.

The Oberförsterin shook her head somewhat dubiously at this sleigh load of inexperienced children, but her husband quieted her apprehensions by laughingly assuring her that Ypsilanti had upon his side years and discretion sufficient to meet any emergency, and that he doubted not but that he would trot along as circumspectly and turn out as readily as though personally conducted by Herr von Budmar himself.

The sleigh went gleaming through the town, the children in jubilant spirits. The drive through the clear frosty air and their charming cousin's affability dispelled their feelings of diffidence, and

they prattled away incessantly. The houses of Braunhausen, great and small, the spired church and the old Rath-house with its row of lindens glowed and sparkled with their countless jewels, flashing back the rays of the winter sun with iridescent splendor. Elizabeth's lovely face beamed with delight. "Surely," thought she, "country pleasures are more delightful and wholesome than the empty, aimless frivolities of a city life. Mother is right, there is no profit in them." Gay laughter and chat enlivened the way, and all too soon the drive came to an end. The Oberförsterei was reached and Elizabeth deposited her young charges in safety at the door, to the intense relief of her Aunt Julchen.

Upon approaching Woltheim, it suddenly occurred to our heroine that she would leave the high road, and return by way of the cherry-tree avenue.

Turning with dignity to her improvised coachman, Elizabeth said with *empressement*, "We will cross the sheep bridge to the meadow, and return to the house by way of the garden."

"As it please you, gracious Fräulein," was the complaisant answer. Anon the whip cracked, the bells rang, and gaily they glided along the transfigured avenue. Upon reaching the bridge, an obstacle presented itself for which Elizabeth was wholly unprepared. At first she looked somewhat nonplussed, hesitated, than with an air of assumed *nonchalance* she said looking questioningly into the coachman's face, "The bridge looks somewhat narrower than our sleigh, Anton!

"So!" coolly responded Anton, his phlegmatic serenity all undisturbed the while.

"We will alight, unloose the horse, and hold the sleigh upon its side," ordered the young lady who had meanwhile made up her mind not to be forced to retreat by so trifling a circumstance as the width of a bridge. No objection being urged to this proposition, the obsequious coachman and his young mistress dismounted.

Operations had been but barely initiated, when to Elizabeth's consternation she saw two horsemen fly over the meadow. "For God's sake, gracious Fräulein, be careful!" cried out Herr von Stottenheim, excitedly, for he it was, accompanied by his friend, Lieutenant von Kadden, who on their road to Woltheim had been eye-witnesses to Elizabeth's adventurous attempt to cross the bridge.

The younger officer apparently did not feel any uneasiness. On the contrary, the ludicrousness of the situation proved too much for his good breeding. He could not by any effort restrain his merriment as he gazed spell-bound at sleigh, at coachman, and at lady.

Elizabeth was disconcerted at this encounter, but summoning all her dignity, said proudly, and with heightened color, "I beg, gentlemen, that you give yourselves no uneasiness over this trifling *contre-temps* of mine. There is no danger; I fully understand the situation."

Lieutenant von Stottenheim, without dismounting, was profuse in his proffers of assistance and ex-

pressions of sympathy; his comrade on the contrary leaped from his horse, and throwing the reins over a willow which stood near, ran down to examine into the condition of the frozen brook below.

Elizabeth unhitched Ypsilanti, and with Anton's powerful help successfully accomplished her purpose, and without accident reached the opposite side of the brook. Herr von Kadden, making no comment, had gallantly assisted the young lady into the sleigh, while his elder and more cautious comrade assured her that he would hasten to appease any anxiety that her grandparents might feel about her, and apprise them of the fortunate ending of her *escapade*.

"See that you adhere strictly to the truth," called back Elizabeth, as she coolly drove Ypsilanti across the snow-covered meadow.

"I pray you hurry, Kadden," called Stottenheim irritably, as his friend still lingered, "I grant you that never maiden made so deep an impression upon my heart as has this charming demoiselle, but I advise you as a friend"—

His comrade interrupted the word of advice. Laughing, he gave his horse the spur, and swift as an arrow sped past his mentor.

"Do not ride so confoundedly fast," called out Herr von Stottenheim angrily, as he flew with all speed in his wake.

The young officers' mettlesome steeds bore them to their destined goal long before Ypsilanti and his young mistress made their appearance; and

while the loquacious Lieutenant entertained the household at Woltheim with an exaggerated description of the demoiselle's adventurous passage "over the Beresina," Herr von Kadden, who saw the sleigh approaching, hastened across the courtyard to assist Elizabeth in alighting.

The young lady soon entered the drawing-room accompanied by her knightly attendant. Her delicate color was flushed into crimson by her late exertion, and her lustrous eyes kindled with more than ordinary brilliance as she vivaciously described her afternoon's adventures, her triumphant journey across the sheep bridge, and the opportune arrival of the gentlemen. Her interested auditors listened admiringly to her animated narration. These incidents contributed to the informality of the visit, and soon the entire company were chatting together as freely and unconventionally as though they had been old acquaintances.

The mistress of Woltheim was not only a gracious but a hospitable hostess. Soon the "bubbling and loud-hissing urn" was brought into the drawing room, and placed by a deft serving-maid upon a small side table. Elizabeth served the fragrant Mocha, greatly to the relief of Charlotte, who sat contentedly the while in her comfortable easy-chair, her inseparable knitting materials in lap. The shining needles glanced in and out, and the bright-hued wool twisted and twined as of yore about the busy, facile fingers, while the faded but kindly blue eyes rested sympathetically now upon

one, now upon another of the members of the group before her. Oftener by far they sought the sympathetic glance of the now aged and infirm Charles von Budmar, the love, the lost love of her youth.

The appreciative guests enjoyed the delicious rolls and conserves which accompanied the cup of hot coffee, and the motherly heart of Frau Budmar warmed toward her young and homeless soldier guests.

With intention apparently most innocent, Herr Budmar now turned toward the younger officer and addressed his conversation more directly to him; but all of his inquiries were answered, greatly to his annoyance, by his older and more loquacious comrade, who embraced this occasion for volunteering a vast amount of rambling, rattling talk. The old man had made up his mind, however, that he was not going to beat a retreat. Summoning all his forces for a sudden attack, he asked pointedly, "How comes it, Herr von Kadden, that you have received the *sobriquet* of Hotspur, when you look so very peaceful?"

"Aye! There's the rub," exclaimed the irrepressible Stottenheim, answering the challenge in his friend's behalf. "The danger lies just there. The young man looks as if he could not take two from twenty; but woe to the unfortunate wight who places confidence in this outward seeming, for in the twinkling of an eye he will discover that he stands upon the ragged edge of a smouldering volcano."

"Well said!" responded Herr von Kadden, laughing. "Who preferreth peace more than I do, except I be 'provoked?' But I call for proof. Strange, very strange, it is, that spasmodic volcanic eruptions should leave no trace."

"You would have the truth? By my soldierly honor, you shall have it," continued the fluent talker. "I'll maintain my words on any plot of ground in 'Christendom.' For some time past," he continued, "my attention has been arrested by the change that has taken place in my good friend Kadden. His trusty henchman informed me confidentially that the little effective scenes which formerly gave zest to their intercourse had been repudiated, and where activity reigned supreme, 'blank ennui showed her weakling face' and as he talked, full plaintively he sighed his grief at his aforetime bold master's 'sickly femininity.'"

Herr von Kadden turned with a half laugh, and comprehending glance to Elizabeth, and addressing her in a low tone said, "I have kept the contract, Fräulein, and in every instance I have paid the churl double."

The whispered remark passed unnoticed, for the principal interest was centered in Stottenheim, who continued with spirit and piquancy. "Demand you the proof? A thousand pardons, but in reply I regret having to refer to that which causes me some embarrassment. No later than yesterday this faithful servant received at the hand of his master a rehearsal of the oldtime energetic policy. All

the circumstances of the case, I candidly confess, do not lie open to me, but this much I can and do affirm, that all the pomp and circumstance of war, was inaugurated solely in consequence of the poor churl's misguided zeal in his master's service. A vase containing naught of value save a few sprays of trailing moss and fir twigs stood upon the top of an old chest, which by the way, constitutes this barbarian's Lares and Penates, at whose shrine he daily worships. Now these inconsequent things in the ordinary renovation of the room were cast out by the poor fellow and left to wither as they would in the rays of the noon-day sun.

"Stottenheim!" exclaimed Herr von Kadden, excitedly, his face ablaze with anger.

"I beg a thousand pardons, a joke, merely a joke," cried the Lieutenant, "I have finished."

"Perchance Herr von Kadden will furnish us with a commentary to this interesting narration," suggested his host pleasantly.

"My friend is far more conversant with detail than I," was the rather brusque answer.

An awkward pause ensued, broken at length by Frau Budmar's kindly voice as she asked with friendly interest. "Was the vase broken?"

"No," responded the irrepressible Stottenheim, "it was a stupid piece of business altogether. To make good the loss of this collection of woodland treasures, the honest fellow offered to procure a cart-load of moss, and a forest of fir branches, but his master refused to be appeased, though 'Birnam

wood be come to Dunsinane;’ his wrath waxed hot, lava, ashes, and stones poured forth in so effective a flood as to overwhelm the unfortunate victim, and thus by one fell act the old *régime* was restored. Have I made good my case?”

The garrulous speaker would have amplified indefinitely, for he noted with gratification the interest that his narration had excited in his auditors. He also saw that no immediate danger was to be apprehended from the anger of von Kadden. The young officer could not repress a smile at the ludicrousness of the situation. He comforted himself also with the thought, “The Fräulein will at least know that her gift was valued by me.”

Frau Budmar drew her own conclusions, for Elizabeth had also a vase containing moss and fir twigs upon her dressing table.

“This little bit of personal history is not told to my friend’s discredit,” said Stottenheim, “on the contrary—do not interrupt me, my dear fellow,” he said, as the young man tried to put a stop to the narration with which he feared his comrade intended to treat his auditors, and whose wholesale holocaust of truth he apprehended was intended as a peace offering to himself. “These little graphic touches give spirit to my story. There is no harm in handing you down to posterity as a knight *débonnaire* and bold.”

Von Kadden designedly maintained a bantering tone, so that it was difficult to separate jest from earnest, which so disconcerted the *raconteur* that

the theme was changed and the conversation again became general.

The Lieutenant now turned his attention to Uncle Charles, and made some inquiry about the estate of Woltheim. The two were soon engrossed in conversation upon agricultural pursuits, the young officer describing to the gratification of the old proprietor his brother's methods of husbandry, as carried on at his large patrimonial estate.

Frau Budmar embraced this opportunity, by making several inquiries of Herr von Kadden concerning his family.

"Kadden, Kadden," repeated the old man musingly, "the name sounds familiar. I remember!" he exclaimed eagerly, "an officer of that name was wounded at the battle of Leipzig. I also at that time received a shot that disabled my left arm; he was severely, and at the time it was thought fatally wounded. We were carried to a farmhouse in the vicinity of the battle field, and remained there long enough to form a close friendship for one another."

"That doubtless was my grandfather," said the young officer, quickly, "for he was wounded at the battle of Leipzig."

"We bewailed our fate together, separated as we were from our families," continued the old cuirassier. "He informed me that he was a widower, and commended to my care, in case of his death, his only son, who was at that time a cadet in some military school."

"That must have been my father," said the young man eagerly.

"Before I was able to be moved, he was pronounced out of danger," he continued. "I have never seen him, nor have I heard of him since. How remarkably people are brought together," said the old man abstractedly. "*This then* is the grandfather who bequeathed to you the old chest. Do you remember the text he wrote in the Bible?"

"I do not," was the embarrassed reply.

Reminiscences of the unfortunate campaign of 1806 were then talked over by the elders of the party, and listened to with respectful attention by the young officers, after which their lengthy and unceremonious visit came to an end.

As the last glow of sunset illumined the evening sky, the grandparents and Elizabeth stood by the window and silently watched the two horsemen as they rode slowly over the white meadow. The young girl had thrown her arm affectionately around her grandmother, and leaning confidently against her said shyly, "Grandmamma, I hope my life may be as lovely and pleasant as yours has been."

"See to it, then, my child, that you make as wise a choice as I did. My husband is a noble, Christian man" said Frau Budmar, significantly.

"My husband must live as I live," said Elizabeth, with an attempt to speak lightly.

"For that reason he must be a Christian," said the grandmother.

CHAPTER XI.

ONE beautiful winter's day succeeded another. Elizabeth did not weary of the pleasure of sleigh riding. She drove her grandparents through the cherry-tree avenue, whose crystal stars and flowerets flashed in the sunshine until they seemed transformed as by some enchanter's wand into myriads of glittering gems; or she took her cousins, a sleigh load of laughing, chattering children, to and from Braunhausen. Elizabeth had no conception how much happiness her bright presence afforded the aged occupants at Woltheim. The charming days glided on, each one rich in pleasure. Occasionally she accompanied her Uncle the Oberförster, as he superintended the felling of the forest trees, making long expeditions with him on foot into the lonely recesses of the wood; or her light footsteps were heard as she flitted hither and thither through the spacious rooms of the old mansion, making herself useful wherever it was possible, an able and ready coadjutor to Charlotte in her domestic arrangements. Even quiet Uncle Charles was infected by her gayety. Elizabeth enjoyed each day more and more. "Her brightness grew apace, and the young girl's loveliness blossomed out into such beauty" that the partial lookers-on in Woltheim were absolutely charmed as they gazed. This so-

journal in the old family home was to Elizabeth a season of unalloyed happiness.

"The maiden does not look as if the canker worm of grief was preying on her heart," laughingly remarked the grandfather one day to his wife.

"*'Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,'*" responded Frau Budmar, with an answering smile.

"The vicinity of the cuirassier Lieutenant may be the cause of all this gayety and radiant beauty."

"That may be" responded the discomfited old man reflectively, inwardly recognizing the superior sagacity of his wise wife. "I confess that even you, Marie, were a puzzle to me before our marriage. A maiden's heart is an enigma not readily solved."

Early upon the morning of this same day came little Marie, the twelve-year-old daughter of Aunt Julchen, the bearer of an invitation for the family at Woltheim to dine that evening at the Oberförsterei. The child excitedly added that papa had shot a beautiful deer.

"Then I suppose we will be treated to the liver this evening," interposed her grandfather, jestingly, "as your mother is an adept in household economy."

"Oh, no!" responded the child; "we ate the liver for luncheon. Mother says that it is an exceptionally fine young animal. Uncle Charles and Charlotte must be sure to be there. The doctor was at the Oberförsterei this morning, and I

overheard him tell Papa that it would do Uncle Charles a world of good to come; that he saw no reason why he should not, if he was well wrapped up and would drive there in the close coach. He also said that it was not well for his health or for his spirits that he should live shut up in the house, even if the weather is cold."

The invitation was accepted. Then Marie, beckoning mysteriously to Elizabeth, retreated with her to the privacy of a window-niche, where she excitedly communicated to her cousin the information that they intended that evening to give a dramatic entertainment, and that Schiller's *Tell* was the play that had been determined upon. "You, Elizabeth, are to have the rôle of Bertha. She is the most distinguished female character in the drama," continued Marie flatteringly. "Herr Reineke, the tutor, has chosen the part of Gessler. I am *Tell's* wife, and Max, who is familiar with the play, will represent *Tell* himself. He is really an expert in the rôle which he has undertaken, he has acted it several times before. The little ones will take some subordinate parts, and Mamma has selected a large apple which will be just what we need to place upon the head of *Tell's* son."

"Have you your costumes ready?" asked Elizabeth, entering into the scheme with child-like sympathy and pleasure.

"Nearly all of them," responded Marie, "my costume is a black velvet jacket to be worn over a white petticoat, and a short apron with rose-colored

favours. Tell will appear in hunting dress with cap and feather. Gessler's costume is not yet ready. You, Elizabeth must appear as a noble lady."

"'Slender as a Ritterdame,'" hummed the young girl with ready appreciation. "Do not fear a failure on my part, Marie; I will enact Fräulein Bertha to the life," she said assuringly, her clear eyes radiant with pleasure. "I will also make a magnificent cloak for Gessler," she added, "by trimming Grandmamma's large velvet mantle with my fur boa."

Marie clapped her hands in glee, and as her grandfather playfully approached to inquire what all this excitement and secrecy meant, he was earnestly implored not to try to find out, and warned that by so doing he would spoil a pleasure they had in store for him that evening.

Marie took her departure, more than ever convinced of the beauty and skill of her admired Berlin cousin, while Elizabeth gravely considered how it would be advisable to appear so as to perform effectively the rôle that she had undertaken.

Having finished Gessler's cloak to her entire satisfaction, the young girl said after dinner, while sipping her coffee, "Grandmamma, I have a favor to ask. I wish you to lend me the key to your antique wardrobe. There is a lovely white dress hanging there that I want to make use of."

"You do not mean my wedding dress!" said her grandmother deprecatingly.

"No, I would not ask for that," returned Eliza-

beth quickly. "I want the dress with the heavy embroidery."

Frau Budmar, accustomed to demands of this nature, discreetly asked no questions, and delivered up the key to her young charge with a smile of sympathy. Elizabeth tripped gayly away. Quickly she ascended the broad staircase and disappeared on the large upper floor, in one of whose spacious rooms stood the old wardrobe, whose massive doors responded grudgingly as she turned the key in the unused lock, and robbed it of one of its richest and most valued treasures. Bearing the coveted prize upon her arm, she vanished into the privacy of Charlotte's room.

With ready helpfulness, the kindly spinster assisted her young favorite in ripping and refitting the robe for the character of Bertha. After the dress was finished, and Charlotte had adjusted the costume to her satisfaction, she led Elizabeth to the mirror, saying, as she withdrew from before her, where she had designedly placed herself that the surprise should be the greater, "Look, my child, you are the very image of your Grandmother when she was your age."

"My hair should be arranged differently," exclaimed the gratified girl enthusiastically. Taking Charlotte's side-combs from her head, she smoothed her curls demurely from her brow, and gathering up the mass of bright brown hair, wound it into a loose, heavy coil, adjusting it high upon her head. In this coil she dexterously inserted a large high

comb. "Now," she cried excitedly, as she looked at her reflection in the glass, "I cannot help it if it does spoil the fun, Grandpapa shall see me. I will place myself under the large picture in the living room."

Charlotte was despatched to request Herr Budmar and his wife to vacate the room for a few moments, and an urgent message was sent to Uncle Charles to come to their assistance immediately. The old man responded to the call of his favorite, and soon with the help of her admiring and able coadjutors, Elizabeth successfully accomplished her object and was seated in state upon the carved sofa, beneath the lovely portrait of the now aged Frau Budmar.

Her two appreciative confederates gazed alternately at the portrait and at the young girl, in wondering delight. The rich glow of a late winter afternoon's sunshine flooded the quaint apartment with a magical light, and with witching glamour rested like a halo upon the sweet face of Fräulein Bertha. The curtain rose and the entering spectators stood spell-bound before the charming vision. The grandfather drew his hand over his eyes as though to wipe away the mist of years. Surely that was the young bride that Fritz von Budmar wooed and won in the old forest home.

"Yes it is she," exclaimed the appreciative Uncle Charles, rubbing his hands vigorously the while. "The representation is to the life. All that is wanting to make it a complete success is the presence of the Lieutenant."

Simultaneously the door opened and the servant announced Herr von Kadden.

The young officer stood for a moment transfixed upon the threshold.

The little company were startled out of all composure, and the grandfather, who was the first to regain his self command, could with difficulty restrain the old uncle from repeating his last words.

An explanation was given of the charming scene, but nothing could have been more embarrassing than the awkward silence of the entire party. One thought was uppermost in the mind of each. The cuirassier caught the infection as he gazed now upon this picture, then upon that.

Elizabeth arose in her confusion. There was a momentary pause, then as Herr von Kadden advanced, the ordinary greetings were exchanged, and the young man made a few incoherent attempts to talk as usual.

Uncle Charles cleared his throat long and lustily and rubbed his hands in appreciation of this *dénoûment*. It was almost by a superhuman effort that he restrained himself from saying in his stentorian tones, "Now the picture is complete. Here stands the cuirassier, and as handsome a cuirassier as the original at that." But the observant Charlotte was equal to the emergency, and handing the old man his snuff-box, prevented an explosion.

Frau Budmar, ordinarily so self-poised, could not readily recover her composure. Her agitation

was not caused alone by the abrupt entrance of the young officer. His intensity of expression, as he looked at her grand-daughter, affected her strangely. She gazed at the picture before her until the present faded out of her mind. Her thoughts were carried back into the past, to the days of her girlhood. Rousing herself with an effort, she watched Elizabeth's expressive face, and the stately man who stood by her side entranced with the tremulous disquiet of deep affection.

Elizabeth quickly left the room to change her dress. Lieutenant von Kadden embraced this opportunity to inform Herr Budmar that as his friend Stottenheim and he had concluded to avail themselves of this beautiful afternoon to visit the Oberförster, he had at the same time brought along with him a letter for his perusal, which he had accidentally found lying among some papers in the old chest. It was written, he said, by his grandfather, and in it he spoke not only of his enforced sojourn at Brechnitz, but also of his friend Herr von Budmar.

"Brechnitz—yes, that was the name of the hamlet, I recollect it now," interposed the old man musingly.

"I shall be glad to have you read the letter," said Herr von Kadden, handing the aforetime cuirassier this leaf from the past. Taking the paper and opening it, he stepped with it to the window, and was soon lost in its perusal.

"I have reread the verse written in the old

Bible," said the young officer, turning timidly to Frau von Budmar. "It is in the 31st chapter of Jeremiah, and the third verse: 'Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.'"

"It is a beautiful verse," said the old lady meditatively, then impulsively added with a wistful look, "God grant to you the fulfilment of this prophecy."

"I hope He may," returned the young man eagerly. "As I read it, it sounded like a good augury as to my future."

Frau Budmar, after a short conversation, discovered that although Herr Kadden acquiesced in the sentiment of the verse, he was unable to comprehend the spirit of it: he gladly accepted the prophecy as an omen for his earthly happiness, without one thought of its having any possible connection with his eternal welfare.

Herr Budmar having perused the letter, now handed it to his wife, who read as follows:

BRECHNITZ, November 9, 1813.

MY DEAR SON:—Through God's mercy my life has been spared. I am grateful, for I feel that you need my parental protection. For more than one week I have been closely associated with a fellow officer, who was wounded upon the same field of battle, a most estimable man, one Herr von Budmar, of Woltheim. He will never know what a comfort his presence has been to me. Should God in His providence see fit to remove me, your earthly protector, do not fail to seek him out. He has given me his promise that he will be to you, my son, a friend and a counsellor. I am still very weak. God

alone knows if my wound will prove fatal. Be it life or be it death, I am resigned. I leave the issue in the hands of Him who doeth all things well.

To these brief lines were added some personal directions, and the letter closed with Herr von Budmar's address.

The grandmother, after reading the letter, held it ponderingly in her hand, "How marvelous," she reflected, "that the grandson should be the bearer of this epistle? Does not the promise given so long ago by my husband revert by claim to him? Has he not been directed to his natural guardian, even as the son alluded to in this paper? Had not she herself been strangely affected by listening to his friend's half ludicrous, half pathetic description of the lonely man seated in sad revery before the old chest, trying to realize the insensate heirloom as a living link in the chain of his long vanished home?"

Elizabeth now entered the room in her ordinary house attire, the great coach with the old grays drew up before the door, and Uncle Charles and Charlotte, in holiday dress and holiday spirits, equipped with a sufficiency of wraps essential for their unwonted journey, took their places in the vehicle, assisted by Anton, old Frederick's factotum. Herr Budmar, after a short consultation with his wife, concluded to walk, as the way was both short and pleasant, and the young Lieutenant had requested permission to accompany them.

Their way led through the garden, from which

they emerged by a little wicket gate into the cherry avenue beyond. Herr von Kadden walked by the young girl's side, the grandparents leisurely following; in passing along the "glimmering, snow-covered avenue" Elizabeth carefully broke off one of the large, ice-embossed branches, fairly ablaze with glittering blossoms. The young officer took it eagerly from her hand, but the frail flowerets parted from the stem, "and lightly, as the soft winds blow, fell tinkling on the ice below." Uttering an exclamation of regret, he said quickly, "These flowers are not to my liking, they are too short-lived; they perish in the handling."

"They are lovely to me," said Elizabeth, "'for under these icy casings lie hidden slumbering little brown buds in each of which is wrapped a world of promise.' Do you not know," said the young girl, while a sudden glow mantled her cheek, "'there is no glory in star or blossom, till looked upon by a loving eye?'"

The moments all too quickly sped; they lingered so long that the marvelous rose-tint had faded from the evening sky, and the soft dreamy twilight lay about and around them as they approached the Oberförsterei.

Frau Budmar was soon made aware of the fact that her daughter had been apprised through Lieutenant Stottenheim, of Herr von Kadden's visit to Woltheim. After the first greetings were exchanged, the Oberförsterin took her mother aside to converse with her confidentially over the inter-

esting event. The grandmother could not deny that the young officer apparently evinced a deep interest in her grand-daughter. "Think of Elizabeth's impressible heart," interjected Aunt Julchen, "with such capacity for loving as hers. Have you heard, mother," she eagerly and pointedly continued, "that Anna, the Burgomaster's daughter, was some time ago secretly betrothed? Her parents found it out only lately, and the betrothal has been accordingly announced. I do not allude to this, thinking that Elizabeth would be guilty of such discreditable conduct—on the contrary; but there is nothing impossible, and the child has been specially confided to your care by her mother. We dare not ignore the warning, but must gravely consider what under the circumstances is best to be done. And it is my opinion," she added earnestly, "that you should at once take Elizabeth back to Berlin, and have a confidential talk with her parents."

Elizabeth was meanwhile energetically engaged with her active, excited young coadjutors in fabricating, with the aid of ropes, tapestry and rugs, a curtain to conceal from the spectators the manipulations necessary to the proper presentation of the drama. The assembled guests occupied the self-same corner of the room in which sat so long ago the young cuirassier, Fritz von Budmar, when he confessed his love for Marie, the pretty, wilful niece of the Oberförster, and asked her hand in marriage of the choleric old uncle. The chief

theme of conversation was naturally the betrothal of Anna, the Burgomaster's daughter. "For my part," said Herr Budmar gravely, "I cannot understand how any father could willingly bestow his daughter's hand upon one who has acted as this man has done."

"Why not?" inquired Herr von Stottenheim.

"Do you ask why not?" responded the old man indignantly. "Did he not beguile the young girl into a secret engagement?"

"Do you consider that so great a crime?" asked the young officer.

"Is it no crime to induce a child to dissimulate, to lie, to break God's command, 'Honor thy father and thy mother?' This sin could only be committed in an age such as ours, when God's ordinances and commandments are ignored or set at naught. No, this sin against high Heaven cannot be excused by sickly sentimental apologies, and smilingly condoned as the innocent folly of two loving hearts. Believe me," he added, solemnly, "God's blessing will never rest upon such a union. The young girl who permits herself to be so beguiled, will find to her cost that she has but the name of marriage, and that there never can be any solid happiness for so conscienceless a lover and herself."

Lieutenant Stottenheim was silent, but gravely nodded his head, as if in full sympathy with the sentiments expressed. The Oberförster remarked sententiously that the bridegroom was a fool, and

that in his judgment there was but a slender chance for the poor girl's happiness.

Herr Kadden during this discussion stood apart with folded arms in the embrasure of the window, apparently engaged in watching the progress of the play. Aunt Julchen, observant as usual, noticed the officer's abstracted mien, and, advancing, kindly essayed to divert his attention by commenting upon the well-sustained efforts of the young actors as they performed their respective parts in the drama. He met her advances courteously, his beautiful eyes expressive of both kindness and sympathy, but he had little to say. Soon the play came to an end. Again turning towards him she said, "You are a musician, are you not?"

"He sings divinely," the ready Stottenheim hastened to reply.

Being a musician herself, the Oberförsterin was delighted with the information, and opening the piano, requested Herr von Kadden to sing. Complying courteously he seated himself at the instrument, and playing his own accompaniment, sang the "*Loreléi*:"

"I know not what spell is enchanting,
That makes me so sadly inclined,
An old strange legend is haunting,
And will not leave my mind."

For once the loquacious lieutenant had not exaggerated. The silence was profound as the rich

notes of the simple melody rang through the room with a tone irresistibly saddening, and when the last wistful notes died away the applause was boundless.

"This charming accomplishment will only add a stronger link to the chain," reasoned the grandmother, as she watched Elizabeth's animated countenance. Frau Budmar had a habit of looking things straight in the face, and she did not attempt to hide from herself the fact that her granddaughter seemed more than interested in the young lieutenant.

The *finale* to the evening's entertainment was a chorus by the children. During its progress, Herr Budmar and his wife had drawn nearer to the piano, and consequently found themselves beside the musician, who had, upon rising from the instrument, again sought the shelter of the window recess, his face grave even to seriousness. "Will you give me one moment?" he asked abruptly, in a low tone, advancing a step nearer the old gentleman. Intuitively conscious of the nature of the communication the young man would make, Herr Budmar bowed a reluctant assent.

"I am aware," began Herr von Kadden, apologetically, "that I have unwarrantably intruded upon your hospitality. Several times during the course of the evening I determined to leave, but I could not. Herr von Budmar," he said earnestly, "will you not be my adviser? I come to you, instead of speaking to your grand-daughter."

"My dear sir," responded the old man quickly,

"you may have mistaken your sentiments. A mere inclination is apt to mislead one into the belief that an emotion is genuine, when it is but a fitful fancy."

"Do you think my love presumptuous?" he modestly asked.

"No," replied the grandfather.

The concert suddenly came to an end, and gave him no time to continue.

One keen glance Herr Budmar cast upon the young officer, then asked, "Will you give me your promise that you will for the present be silent?"

Impulsively he extended his hand in answer, but asked in a low tone "Will you permit me to call upon you meanwhile?"

"I will shortly call upon you both, gentlemen," said Herr von Budmar aloud, thus diverting attention from their confidential conversation.

Lieutenant Stottenheim, to whom these words were more particularly addressed, was, as customary, profuse in his expressions of pleasure at so unlooked for a mark of favor. The talk was now general and discursive, and the officers shortly withdrew. Mindful of his promise, Herr von Kadden bowed as formal an adieu to Elizabeth as to the rest of the company, and the pleasant evening came to an end.

CHAPTER XII.

SOME days had passed since the events related in the last chapter, when early one afternoon, Frederick, with the antiquated coach and the old greys, drew up before the door, and Elizabeth and her grandparents set out for Braunhausen. The new commander, together with his wife and daughters, had called early in the autumn upon the venerable pair at Woltheim. In all probability the visit would not have been returned while Elizabeth remained with her grandparents, had not Herr Budmar promised the young officers that he would soon call upon them. He accordingly came to the conclusion that it would be a want of etiquette to allow this opportunity to pass without a call of ceremony upon Colonel von Bonsak and his family. Herr Budmar accompanied his wife and grand-daughter to the door, leaving them to pay their visit while he hunted up the young lieutenants.

The Colonel, his wife and the young ladies were in their pleasant sitting-room when the visitors were announced, and welcomed their guests with manifest pleasure. The commander remained and chatted with the elderly ladies while awaiting Herr Budmar's expected arrival. The daughters, after the usual civilities had been exchanged, retired with their charming guest to the seclusion of a

prettily furnished alcove, where they comfortably seated themselves, evidently with the intention of becoming better acquainted. The two elder daughters were somewhat faded; the third altogether unattractive; but Adolfine, the youngest, who had just reached her sixteenth year, was a brilliant beauty. Elizabeth, unaccustomed to the society of such gossiping companions, was overwhelmed by the torrent of cross-questioning relative to life in the Residence: balls, theaters, concerts received their full meed of attention. Although with many advantages of education, she was obliged to plead ignorance of the various topics that were introduced. Vainly she tried to give some satisfactory replies to their numerous interrogatories. She could not fail however to perceive their disappointment at her imperfect knowledge of what had been going on during the winter in society circles in Berlin.

"Braunhausen is a miserable nest," said Adolfine, with a shrug of the shoulders and a little ill-nature in her tone. I consider it a great misfortune that papa was removed to this place just as I was coming out in society and entertained hopes of enjoying myself."

"You are a foolish child," said the elder sister, with an indulgent smile, "for you know that you are bound to find entertainment and diversion wherever you are."

"So?" responded the merry girl, putting up her chin saucily and shaking her dark curls mischiev-

ously. "This regiment boasts of only four unmarried lieutenants, and consequently the balls are frightfully stupid."

"The best dancer of the four only favors those ladies who are uninvited," laughingly remarked one of the sisters.

"Therefore, it is my good pleasure to remain seated," interposed Adolfine, with affected *naïveté*, which her sisters accepted as pure coin.

Elizabeth's face began to burn, but the dread of appearing moved at the mention of Herr von Kadden's name forced her to self-control, and when one of the ladies asked, "You are acquainted with Herrs von Stottenheim and Kadden?" she answered with quiet dignity, "Yes, I have met both gentlemen."

"Von Kadden is very distinguished-looking," said the elder sister, with condescending affability. "He has a retort for all of Adolfine's speeches."

"Had, you should say," interposed Adolfine, briskly. "Stottenheim apologizes for his friend's gravity now-a-days, by saying that he is a victim to continuous headache."

"That is true; and I have heard Papa say that he no longer rides so recklessly as he formerly did."

"It is perfectly delightful to see him upon horseback. That fearless nature of his is his especial charm," returned Adolfine boldly. "I intend riding with my father, and also expect to ride steeple-chases with the officers of the garrison."

The sisters laughed at the young girl's boldness, and turning to her guest, Cäcilie said apologetically, "Adolfine is a genuine soldier's child."

The knowledge that this strikingly beautiful young girl would engage in sports for which she was unfitted both by education and nature, and with one to whom such fearlessness would only prove an additional attraction, so engrossed Elizabeth's mind that it intensified the sense of forlornness that was gradually creeping over her. From riding, the sisters rang the changes to balls, from balls to tableaux, and back again. They informed their guest that they contemplated giving, the following week, a series of *soirées*, inaugurating them with tableaux, and winding up each evening's entertainment with a dance. "Herr von Kadden," said Adolfine, affectedly, "shall be Egmont, and I will be Clärchen."

"Clärchen must be a blonde," interposed the elder sister. "Your style is thoroughly Italian. You or Cäcilie could take the rôle of Eleonore!"

Adolfine shook her curls saucily in demur.

"She is a provoking girl," laughed Cäcilie; "no character will answer for her but that of the heroine. My dear young lady, you must take part in the tableaux," she said, turning graciously to Elizabeth. Cäcilie had from the first observed their young guest with interest, having received from Stottenheim a graphic description of the lovely girl who was making Woltheim her home for the winter. She was also aware of the strict religious

views entertained by her grandparents, the well known Pietists, and naturally concluding that she must lead a wearisome life in that secluded spot, good-naturedly determined to provide a little diversion for her.

"Oh, do not ask me!" exclaimed Elizabeth, blushing painfully.

"You and Herr von Stottenheim would answer admirably to pose for the royal mourning pair," said Adolfine, with a mixture of sarcasm and jest in her tone.

The sisters laughed heartily at this sally, while Elizabeth, indignant at their rudeness, showed plainly by her altered manner that the jest was not appreciated by her. Controlling herself with an effort, she said, with quiet dignity, "I cannot take part in the *tableaux*."

"Why not? It can't be possible that you should think it wrong," said Adolfine, with comic gravity.

"It is quite possible that I should think it wrong for me," said Elizabeth, haughtily. "With strange gentlemen—no, I could not take part."

Adolfine opened her eyes to their fullest extent, shrugged her shoulders significantly, but remained silent.

"Do you not long to return to Berlin?" said Cäcilie, in order to divert the conversation from dangerous ground; "you must be very lonely at Woltheim."

Elizabeth answered pleasantly that she preferred

a country life, and described with some of her wonted vivacity the dramatic entertainment given by her cousins at the Oberförsterei. She also spoke of the numerous and delightful sleigh-rides which she had enjoyed since she had been at her grandfather's.

The elder sisters were profuse in their expressions of pleasure at her descriptions, but Adolfine said, with her usual audacity, and with a spice of malice in her tone, "And you can really amuse yourself with children?" Elizabeth, apprehending some scorn for herself in these words, felt provoked, and with heightened color looked at her interlocutor with an expression of genuine astonishment; but her sisters again laughed heartily. The elder however said apologetically, "Adolfine is an '*enfant terrible*.'"

Tea was served, and the conversation was brought to an abrupt end, the young ladies joining their elders at the table. Conversation was now general, the daughters of the house naturally and gracefully taking part.

A very short time had elapsed when Lieutenant von Stottenheim was announced. As customary, he was profuse in his expressions of regret at missing the long-expected visit from Herr von Budmar. "We must have just escaped meeting each other," he said, "for I had only gone to inquire after the health of my friend Kadden."

What is the matter with Lieutenant von Kadden?" inquired Frau von Bonsak, sympathetically.

"Always his unfortunate head, gracious lady," was Stottenheim's answer. "I insisted upon his accompanying me here, thinking it might do him good, but he declined coming."

"He did not complain of headache when I saw him," said Herr Budmar, ingenuously.

"He appears to be dull and out of spirits lately," interposed Stottenheim quickly.

"Perhaps he is trying to curb his impetuosity; and from the reports in circulation about him, I think it not a bad idea."

"One cannot blame a young man for being impetuous, or for an occasional outburst of temper," said the Colonel with an indulgent smile. "It is really a pleasure to see him ride. Only last week his horse vaulted across a ditch, he sitting upon his back meanwhile as erect and firm as though carved out of stone; the rest of the officers shrank from attempting to follow. Upon reaching the opposite side, he looked about him in surprise to find himself alone; he did not think that he had done anything out of the common. I scolded him soundly however because he had unnecessarily risked not only his own neck, but that of the noble animal he bestrode, and proposed that he should ride some little distance further, so that he could return without danger. He rode a few paces, then checking his steed with a single movement, before we knew what he was about, his fiery chestnut leaped back over the chasm, and lo! von Kadden stood coolly at my side. The action was so sudden that it almost took away my breath."

"Herr von Kadden has promised me that I shall ride that noble creature in the spring," said Adolfine, her eyes sparkling with admiration.

Frau Budmar turned quickly, her gaze resting keenly for a moment upon the young girl's animated face. Her mother, noticing the look, said, with an apologetic smile, "Adolfine has the spirits of a child, and is treated as such by the officers of our garrison; each one has a jest with her."

Lieutenant Stottenheim verified the mother's statement by addressing some teasing remark to the saucy girl, in order to elicit the customary spirited and *piquant* retort. The talk was brought to an abrupt ending by the announcement of a visitor, Fräulein Amalie Keller, daughter of the widowed Präsidentin. The two elderly gentlemen conversed together, the Lieutenant devoting himself to the young ladies. They were soon engaged in animated discussion regarding the approaching *fête*. "All the details can be readily arranged," said Fräulein Keller, with confidence. "We will have to undergo considerable drilling, and must at once put ourselves under training. Herr von Kadden and Cäcilie will answer admirably as Egmont and Clärchen," she added with decision.

"Adolfine has set her heart upon taking that character," said Cäcilie, deprecatingly.

"She would not answer at all for a Clärchen," returned Amalie decidedly, "but she could represent a handsome noblewoman," she added reflectively.

"That was my idea," interposed Stottenheim. "Kadden can pose for Ferdinand. He is younger than I, and I will undertake the more mature and dignified rôle of Count Egmont." The ladies smiled an indulgent assent, and the tableaux and their details were now fully discussed.

"Mamma will send out her invitations the following week, and as we will not have room to dance, we will act a comedy."

"A French comedy?" asked the elder sister with interest.

"For Heaven's sake, do not let it be French!" interposed Stottenheim; "do not inflict such a penance upon either the actors or the public."

"A German comedy is too heavy," said Cäcilie. "Mamma is of my opinion, also. We have no choice but Kotzebue."

"Well, *he* is an admirable writer. Why not decide upon him?"

This proposal met the views of the young ladies, and they agreed to decide upon the comedy that evening.

The Lieutenant meanwhile looked knowingly at Elizabeth. Fräulein Keller also raised her clear, wise-looking, blue eyes, and fixed them full upon the face of the silent guest, who, coloring and shrinking under the gaze, cast down her eyes in embarrassed silence. "I assure you, Fräulein Keller," said Stottenheim, "that this seemingly quiet young lady can be merry enough at times."

"Undoubtedly you could assist us with your ex-

perience, coming so lately from the Residence," said the young lady, courteously enough, but with an expression which plainly said, "Your advice would be superfluous."

"I would not presume," answered Elizabeth, quietly. "I am incapable of giving advice, that is, so far as my knowledge of the subject is concerned."

"To be sure, you are very young; but it will only require a certain amount of study and training. It will not take long to acquire the little that is necessary," said the young lady, patronizingly.

Elizabeth smiled somewhat ironically. She was offended, for she detected some scorn in the words, and also a doubt as to her capabilities.

"Let us hope that you will change your mind," said Stottenheim, graciously; then turning to Amalie, he added, "Do not be *too* patronizing, Fräulein Keller, nor inquire too curiously into motives; you may receive from this reticent young lady from Berlin a lecture that will not be to your liking."

"What do you mean?" she inquired. Then blushing remembering the extreme pietistic views of the Budmarschen family, and laughing to hide her confusion, she asked, "It is not possible, Fräulein Kühneman, that you think it is wrong?"

Elizabeth maintained an embarrassed silence. Her pride was roused and her temper ruffled. This question seemed only an additional irritation to her.

"Wrong!" exclaimed Adolfine scornfully.

Elizabeth, disgusted at her rudeness, said rather hastily, "If it is not wrong, it is indecorous, and, besides," she added, with a proud little toss of her head, "I don't think tableau or comedy one of the great objects of life."

"Indecorous!" cried the young ladies simultaneously. Elizabeth, conscious that she had been rather rude and had spoken with more energy than was polite, added more graciously, "I express the views of my parents, and of my grandparents."

"Come, confess," laughed Adolfine, "that you would take part if you dared."

"No, I would not," was the quick answer.

"The gracious Fräulein shall not be urged to give reasons," said Stottenheim, coming to the rescue. "Let the subject rest, young ladies. It has too many sides for present discussion."

The hint was taken, and Elizabeth was relieved from answering other embarrassing questions, but she felt uncomfortable. She had been deeply offended and was conscious that she was unlike her companions. Her whole nature rebelled against the tone of their conversation, and the aimless trivialities which apparently engrossed their entire attention.

The young ladies now listened in silence to their elders. After the weather, roads, and neighborhood, each in turn had been discussed, the Colonel introduced Braunhausen, saying courteously that he had found the town pleasant and the society

agreeable. "And only think," he added, turning to Herr Budmar, "My wife opened the ball night before last!"

"And Papa danced," interposed Adolfine, mischievously.

"I did, but not with my old wife," said the Colonel with a laugh, "I danced with the young and pretty women."

"How hateful that sounds!" thought Elizabeth.

The carriage came at last, and with a sigh of relief she took her seat beside her grandmother. She was unable to explain satisfactorily to herself why she had felt so out of place. The prattling, gossiping girls were distasteful to her. But particularly was she affected unpleasantly by Adolfine's bright face and sparkling coquetry of manner.

"How did you enjoy the visit, Elizabeth?" asked her grandfather, as they left the town behind them.

"The young ladies differ so widely from any of my acquaintances," replied Elizabeth, evasively. "Did you think that I was not pleased, Grandpapa?"

"I did," he answered. "I am glad that you have had an opportunity of mingling for a little in such a circle. You can now draw your own conclusions."

"Grandpapa," said Elizabeth, hesitatingly, "I was for a time painfully perplexed."

"Yes, I expected you would be," was the brief answer.

All three remained silent. After a time Herr Budmar, with an effort, began: "I am the bearer of a message to you to-day, Elizabeth, and I know no time more suitable for its delivery than the present."

The young girl felt her heart beginning to beat faster; she knew where her grandfather had been, and yet—it was not possible that the message was from *him*.

"You are aware that you have some claims to beauty, my child," he said quietly.

Her heart grew lighter as he spoke, and she smilingly responded, "You say that I resemble Grandinamma."

"You do," continued Herr von Budmar briefly. "The communication with which I am entrusted I have agreed to deliver in person. The long and the short of it is, that a young gentleman has confessed to me that he finds you more beautiful and lovable than all the other ladies of his acquaintance, and that he modestly hopes for a reciprocity of affection on your part." Again he paused, and the young girl dared scarcely breathe.

"I have demanded and he has pledged me his word of honor that until the first of May he will leave us undisturbed, and take time to prove whether his love is genuine. I promised that I would enter into an explanation with you, telling you of my requirement and of his promise, so that you could not misconstrue his conduct. During your last week in Woltheim, you will have time

to reflect upon your own feelings also, so that you will be the better prepared to give an answer to the Herr Lieutenant."

Elizabeth was glad that her face was shaded by the dark carriage. She listened to her grandfather's words with a fluttering heart, unconscious whether the effect of the communication was saddening or the reverse. Then with a sudden glow of delight she felt that "she was chosen by the man whom her love and admiration had chosen." It was too wonderful to be true! Was it not all a dream?

One week, the last week at Woltheim, had passed, and the day following was set for Elizabeth and her grandmother's departure for Berlin. After dinner, the Oberförster, by the secretly expressed wish of Frau Budmar, came to invite his niece to accompany him on foot upon an expedition to the forest. She had been closely confined to the house for some days: a heavy thaw having set in, the wind and the rain had rendered walking an impossibility. To-day the weather was comparatively good, and as they would take the bridle-path through the wood, walking would be at least practicable. That the Oberförster proposed extending their walk to the fir-mount was *not* considered altogether advisable by the grandmother; still she was not at liberty to enter into an explanation with her son-in-law. Frau Budmar stood by the window watching them as they picked their way over the moist meadow. "Poor child!" she

sighed "she is so young. If she had only chosen a man out of our own circle I would not feel so badly. Surely it is the Lord's will, else why did her mother take her to that ball, why was he there, and why should he be stationed in our garrison?"

Elizabeth meanwhile walked to the height with light step and with a still lighter heart, and gazed meditatively from its summit. Braunhausen and its turrets lay beneath her, hidden from her view by an impenetrable mass of dark gray cloud; the wind whistled and moaned among the naked branches, and the few withered leaves left upon the bare boughs rustled mournfully as the fierce gusts swept over the swaying tops of the defenceless trees.

Her uncle did not permit her to remain long upon the bleak summit, but withdrew her to the protection of the sheltering wood. Following the bridle-path down the height, they reached a moist, flat region, where workmen were busily engaged felling the trees, which the Oberförster had come to inspect.

It had been formerly used as a hunting-ground; the trunks of the alders and the piled logs that lay around were tinged with a bright red glow. Elizabeth enthusiastically admired the picturesqueness of the scene, and warmly thanked her uncle for inviting her to accompany him upon so charming an expedition. As they advanced, they found a fire burning; the dense, gray clouds of smoke curled upwards in solitary dark columns, then

commingled with the leaden sky beyond. The Oberförster withdrew to give some directions to the wood-cutters, and to inspect their work. Elizabeth seated herself meanwhile upon a felled tree, and leaning back upon a pile of corded wood, stretched her damp, cold feet toward the glowing coals, and enjoyed the warmth their heat imparted. For a long time she sat silent, absorbed in reverie, her gaze riveted upon the fire. "It is so lovely in the country," she thought. "How will it be when I am in town again? I shall feel as though it had all been a dream, and it may as well be. Life in Braunhausen would be unsatisfactory to me; gossiping, riding, tableaux and comedy is not my forte, and *he*—*he* would not be happy or content to lead the life that I have been taught to think right and best; he would soon weary of it." She was painfully aware that to-day was fête-day at Colonel von Bonsak's, and that *he* would be one of the happy throng, laughing and jesting with the merry-makers there; that was his world. "But I love him," she thought, with a sharp pang; "I have loved him from the first." In her absorption she had given no heed to what was occurring about her. She was at length aroused by the crackling of branches, and approaching footsteps. Still she did not raise her eyes fixed upon the burning coals. Suddenly she heard, apparently quite near her, the snort of a horse. Looking up in affright, she saw upon the verge of the wood the object of her thoughts holding his horse by

the bridle. He no longer hesitated, but leading the animal carefully over the felled wood, stood motionless before her. They neither of them knew how long they stood facing each other. The young officer was the first to recover himself, and hurriedly stated that in riding up the mountain from the Braunhausen side, he had accidentally entered the wood-path, and observing the workmen felling the trees, had advanced until, to his surprise, he had discovered her face amid the curling columns of smoke. They had made but a few common-place remarks when the Oberförster made his appearance, and by so doing relieved them from the embarrassing meeting. He expressed his surprise at finding the young officer there. Herr von Kadden at once volunteered an explanation of his presence. With thanks, he accepted the Oberförster's invitation, and seated himself for a few moments by the fire.

"I understand that a play is to be acted at the Colonel's, to-day," said the Oberförster.

"I know little of what is going on, as I do not take part in the performance."

"I heard that you were to represent the chief character," continued Herr Schultz.

"No, I find that I am altogether superfluous," was the brief reply.

The Oberförster while speaking was trying to light his segar. Stooping, Elizabeth took up one of the burning branches and laughingly handed it to her Uncle. "Will you not also profit by this

chance," he courteously asked the officer, looking at the same time significantly at the extinguished segar that he still held in his hand. The young girl extended the glowing twig. Rising, he thanked her with studied politeness, relighted his segar, and with a distant bow turned away. Upon reaching the bridle-path he mounted, looked around as though in silent farewell, until a turn in the path hid her from his sight. At that moment the parting was easy to bear. Before the happy young girl's vision all other objects had for the time vanished. Her uncle gazed after Herr von Kadden for a few moments in silent cogitation, then with a significant glance at his niece set out upon their return to Woltheim.

"I deliver up my charge into your hands," said the Oberförster to her grandparents as he entered the living room with Elizabeth. "She is an admirable pedestrian. The alder thicket is a picturesque spot, is it not?" he asked turning to his niece.

"It is wonderfully beautiful," she enthusiastically responded.

Frau Budmar gazed with loving admiration into Elizabeth's charming face; the young girl's countenance was rosy with the brisk walk and contact with the frosty air; her eyes were bright with a more intense lustre than usual, and her dark brown curls escaping from beneath her hat in a fluffy mass had the effect of making her appear still more child-like than ever.

"We had an adventure," said her uncle, smiling. "A young cuirassier lost his way upon the mountain, and wandered within the limits of the alder wood."

"Herr von Kadden!" exclaimed the grandmother, involuntarily.

"Yes, that's the man," said the Oberförster. "He was in a great hurry. I do not think that I have ever met a young man so gravely serious as he. He had nothing to say; indeed, he scarcely bade us adieu."

Elizabeth left the room hurriedly to remove her wraps, and her uncle soon took his departure.

"It is strange how they are ever encountering each other," said Frau Budmar to her husband when they were alone. "He is to be commended that he did not avail himself of this opportunity to talk with her," she added; "he evidently holds his promise sacred."

"Yes, the case is a peculiar one, and I consider it the more peculiar," he added, with a smile, "that the suitor has won the sympathy of the grandmother's heart. Daughter Julchen must for the present be kept in ignorance of the circumstances, if we would keep it secret," said Herr Budmar, with a significant smile. "You had better go with Elizabeth to Berlin, and talk the matter over with her parents."

CHAPTER XIII.

It was the first of May; soft rain showers fell at intervals upon the tender green of budding rose-bush and verdant lawn; the blossoms of the apple trees "spread themselves out in a pattern of delicate rose-color against the vivid blue of the spring sky," while a glow of sunlight now and again poured in through the open windows, flooding the pleasant living-room with its transforming glory. Woltheim's master and mistress sat sole occupants of the apartment, absorbed in reading the numerous letters which had just been received from their absent children. "The good God be thanked," said Frau Budmar, fervently, "that these missives do not bring us bad news. I often wish that Wilhelm and Marie lived nearer to us," she added, with a suppressed sigh.

"I will send them money for their travelling expenses, and we will have them with us this summer," said her husband, encouragingly. "In the autumn we will pay Marie a visit, and take a look at our youngest grandchild."

With a gratified smile his wife looked up from the corner of the antique sofa whose comfortable high back supported her aching head.

But soon the quiet of the apartment was dis-

turbed by the closing of the hall door, and a moment after Herr von Kadden entered unannounced.

"Ah, so!" said the old man with a knowing smile, as he arose and advanced to meet his guest.

"This is the first of May," said the young man, drawing a deep breath, as though he had a heavy load upon his mind.

Herr Budmar looked inquiringly at his wife, afraid that the interview with his guest might increase the pain in her head, but she requested them to remain. Her physical suffering was trifling compared with the solicitude of the grandmotherly heart at the presence of the young officer, and the knowledge of the errand upon which he had come.

"It would be superfluous for me to ask why you are here," began the old man, frankly, "your presence to-day is in itself explanation sufficient."

"I hope my time of probation has ended," said the officer, earnestly. "I long to have this state of uncertainty removed."

"You have not seen my grandchild since?" questioned Herr Budmar.

"Once, upon the street in Berlin," was the brief answer.

"You did not speak?" he again asked.

"Unquestionably not," he responded, "but I presented her with a bunch of violets that I held in my hand at the time."

"So," said the old man reflectively, then remained silent.

"You do not consider that act a breach of my

word?" asked the soldier quickly, while a heightened color mounted to his face.

Herr Budmar, turning toward his good wife, said smilingly, "I leave the verdict to another and a more lenient court than mine."

The grandmother gave him meanwhile so kindly a smile that to his relief the young man saw he had nought to fear from the decision of this gentle judge.

"I frankly confess that the unexpected meeting with your grand-daughter gave me great pleasure; I had no idea that my probation would be so hard to bear. I found to my cost that I had given my promise inconsiderately."

"A soldier should be accustomed to obedience, but suffer me to advise you not to look upon my wife or myself as hostile to your interests," he said in a friendly tone, extending at the same time his hand to the young officer.

A marvelous change passed instantaneously over Herr von Kadden's face. With a confiding smile that illumined his grave countenance like a flash of sunshine, he responded "I look upon you as my friend."

"You know not whose alliance you are courting," said the old man, gravely. "Our friendship may in the end prove distasteful to you."

The officer meanwhile gave him a look of inquiry.

"As a casual acquaintance, you might look upon me as quite agreeable," he continued; "but as a

member of our family circle you give me not only a friend's right but a friend's duty to teach you the tenets of our faith, and our rules of action. I warn you that it will require no small amount of courage to become a member of our family connection."

"I have no fear upon that score," he laughingly replied.

"Because you do not realize the consequences," Herr Budmar continued, gravely; "and to put your patience to the test, I shall embrace this opportunity to speak seriously with you, which I doubt not you will consider irrelevant to the subject in hand."

"I will listen cheerfully to whatever you please to say to me," rejoined the young man earnestly.

"It will be a continuation of the talk we had last winter. You at that time frankly confessed to me that you could not honestly accept our faith, and that you did not consider it necessary to do so in order to be happy."

"If Fräulein Elizabeth loves me as I do her, we cannot be otherwise than happy," he answered.

"You say that you love the truth, and you also say that the differences in certain articles of faith and practice among professed Christians make you doubt many things which you would otherwise gladly believe; that your idea of happiness is only what this world has to bestow; that you do not even believe in a life beyond the grave, and that you put as far from you as possible the thought of death as a disagreeable and gloomy

subject for contemplation, and think of life as an affair of sunshine and gladness. Whereas, Elizabeth has from her youth up been taught to believe that our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, whom you tacitly reject, is 'the way inviolable, the truth infallible, the life uncreated—the life that cannot end,' and, although in weakness, she can say with one of God's saints, 'Poor and brief is all that passeth away with time, therefore whatsoever Thou bestowest upon me beside Thyself is but mean and unsatisfactory, whilst Thou art not seen and not fully obtained, for He himself is the everlasting rest of all those whom I have loved upon earth and will continue to love throughout all the eternity of God.'"

"I take no exception to so beautiful a faith," interposed the young man eagerly. "On the contrary, would to God that I could be a partaker of the happiness this belief imparts to its followers."

"If Elizabeth can pledge you her love, knowing the gap that yawns between her faith and your unbelief, it can only be because she entertains the sure hope that you *will be* a partaker with her in the same holy faith, in the same blessed hope. And this is not only Elizabeth's prayer, but ours also. And now I have done, and ask in conclusion, will you give me your promise that you will never in the days to come try to uproot this faith, to which she clings with all the strength of her ardent young nature, for it is her life. Do you promise?" he asked solemnly.

The young man could not speak; as he listened, a painful thrill seemed to dart through his frame. Impulsively he extended his hand, and clasped that of his interrogator. The good man's words and his solemn appeal affected him strangely. There was a momentary quivering of the lip, his eyes were dimmed with unwonted moisture and his voice tremulous with emotion, as he said, "I give you my promise, and I shall be proud and happy to accept your proffered love. I inherit nothing but the *memories* of a father," he added with pathos.

Motherly Frau Budmar now rose, and standing before him gazed sympathizingly upon him. Taking her hand, he raised it reverently to his lips. She kissed him upon the brow, and gently smoothed his hair. The young man could no longer restrain his emotion; tears fell unheeded; he was completely unnerved, but at the same time soothed by this tenderness. Never before in his young life had he felt the power of caressing love. The soft, light touch of the delicate womanly hand exerted a more potent power than all the words that had preceded it.

Herr Budmar, addressing him with ordinary calmness, said, "One week from to-morrow, my son-in-law and his family expect to be in Woltheim."

"Then I will go to Berlin," he said quickly.

"Pray do not go," interposed the grandmother, "we would much prefer to have Elizabeth with us at that time."

"I will wait another week," he replied, with a sigh.

Herr Budmar encouragingly said that he would speak to his son-in-law and his daughter upon the very evening of their arrival, and would at once apprise him of the result. Assured of the interest and sympathy of the grandparents, the young man set out with a light heart upon his road to Braunschhausen.

That same evening Kadden's friend, Stottenheim, entered his room, with the exclamation, "What on earth was the matter with you this noon, old fellow? You rode along at a snail's pace down the broad street in the pouring rain, as if you were weather-proof. You looked neither to the right nor to the left. I was at Colonel Bon-sak's at the time, standing at the window with the young ladies. We did all we could to attract your attention, but in vain; you rode as one in a dream. We enjoyed a hearty laugh at your expense. Adolfine said it was the first of May, and that you were out in the rain trying to grow big."

Kadden gazed at his questioner in bewildered surprise.

"Where had you been?" asked his friend, curiously.

"With the grandparents," was the rather confused reply.

"With the grandparents?" repeated the astonished listener. "Where are your grandparents?"

"Not mine," laughed Kadden, suddenly re-

called to himself, "but the aged pair at Woltheim are such typical representatives of the class that I fancied you would recognize them at once."

"Ah, so! Woltheim," said Stottenheim, dryly; "Have you committed yourself, Kadden?"

"No, I have not," answered the young man, indignantly.

"I sincerely hope not," continued his friend, in a propitiatory tone. "You would otherwise bring sorrow upon a loving young heart."

Kadden stared at his interlocutor in surprise.

"I allude to Adolfine," said Stottenheim, in answer to his bewildered look. "She is greatly interested in all your actions, and I should say that her symptoms indicate something deeper than mere friendship, if I am any judge in these matters. She asked me to-day if Fräulein Kühneman was at Woltheim."

"A most intolerable girl," interposed Kadden.

"Ungallant man," said the Lieutenant, with a provoking smile. "Suppose that I should make use of your remark to serve my own private ends. I should like to succeed in convincing her that your affection is only a plaything for a sunshiny day."

"I give you full authority to do so," said Kadden, turning abruptly away.

The days dragged their weary length to the impatient young heart on the other side of the fir mountain, and the week of probation came at last

to an end. Frederick and the old greys set out one morning for the station to meet the incoming train and bring the anxiously expected guests to Woltheim. Upon the evening of that same day a family convocation was held; the result proving favorable to the wishes of the young officer. All available inquiries and investigations by the Geheimerath had ended satisfactorily. The conclusion of the whole matter was that Herr von Kadden enjoyed an enviable reputation. Though impetuous to a fault, it was admitted by all that he was of a warm-hearted and lovable nature, and in addition thereto was the fortunate possessor of an income sufficient to enable him to support his wife in the station of life to which she had been accustomed.

At the conclusion of the conference the mother hurriedly left the room; she could no longer restrain her emotion, and longed to escape to the quiet of her own apartment, where she could give free vent to her overcharged heart. She stood for a time by the open window, lost in thought. Then raising her streaming eyes to the deep blue vault of heaven, with its myriads of glittering stars, she breathed in sobbing, ejaculatory prayer, "Visit not upon my child, O God, the consequences of my transgression. I am the servant who knowing his Lord's will yet did it not. In my ignorance I would be wiser than my Lord, who said, 'Thou canst not serve two masters.' I acknowledge my sin; have mercy upon me and bless my child."

The day following the sun shone brightly, all nature rejoicing in the sweet, balmy atmosphere of the traditional May-day. Elizabeth sat upon a low stool—her usual seat when talking with her grandmother. All had been told her, and no traditional princess in a fairy tale was ever more happy than she. That *he*, her handsome, stately "Launcelot" had chosen her out of all the world seemed almost beyond belief. Surely she was in a blissful dream from which she would presently awake. Her grandparents watched the illumination and play of her expressive countenance, and well were they aware of the beautiful picture of the future that the young girl's imagination was painting. Her grandfather aroused her at times, but in the arrogance of youth she thought, "He speaks as an old man; he has long ago forgotten his young love's dream."

"Do not fancy, my dear child," he said gravely, "that because your brave knight loves you he will yield you henceforth automatic obedience. From experience I can assure you to the contrary. This is the rock upon which many a love has suffered shipwreck. You must learn to accommodate yourself to his will. 'A loving woman must ever subdue her nature to her husband's.'"

An angry flush suffused Elizabeth's face as her grandfather spoke.

"The one you have chosen," he continued after a pause, "is of a frank and impulsive nature, and you will learn sooner or later that it will not do to

place yourself in opposition to his will. Your grandmother was like the holy women of old of whom the Apostle Peter speaks; her outward adorning was not the wearing of gold or the putting on of apparel, but the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which 'in the sight of God,' is of great price. These are old-fashioned jewels, I grant you, but nevertheless greatly to be desired in a wife. Upon the morning of her wedding day she confessed in all humility of spirit, that the words dearest to her were those of *Holy Writ*, 'And he shall be thy lord.' "

"Be thy lord!" repeated Elizabeth, with scorn, while an indignant flush rose to her cheeks. "Grandpapa," she exclaimed hastily, "*that* is no longer the *mode*."

"No longer the *mode*!" responded her grandfather; "*mode* or not, I can assure you, Elizabeth, that it is the only way by which a wife can preserve the love and respect of her husband. For your own happiness I would advise you not to attempt to oppose Herr von Kadden. Should you do so, you will discover the wisdom of my advice upon this, the day of your betrothal."

Elizabeth remained mute, but the shrewd old man was well aware of the meaning of her silence.

"I would save you, my child," he continued, "from the sorrow that the contrary course will inevitably bring upon you. Your grandmother even yet is indulgent to my masculine traits and has accommodated herself to them, during all the years

of our wedded love; and I assure you that I was never as fiery and as impetuous as a certain young man of our acquaintance, who shall remain nameless for the present. Should he in after days try your temper sorely, would you meet him with reproaches, Elizabeth?"

The young girl blushed, but nodded assent to her grandfather's query.

"My child," said the old man prophetically, "that course of action you will find will not mend matters. Recriminations never will; for he can reproach in turn, and likely as not, if he thinks it no disgrace to box the ear of a servant, he may for variety's sake try it upon his wife."

"Grandpapa!" cried Elizabeth in horrified surprise, "I would rather die than think anything so hateful. How can you speak in that coarse way of refined people?" she added angrily.

"My dear child, I am sorry to say that such things are of frequent occurrence, not only in the lower walks of life, but in circles of culture and refinement. Anger does not ask if the offender be patrician or plebeian; it is a great leveler."

Elizabeth attempted to smile, but her lovely eyes were suffused with angry tears. As her grandfather paused and walked to the window, the young girl hid her burning cheeks and her rebellious tears in her grandmother's lap. Stroking the dark brown curls caressingly, Frau Budmar whispered gently, "Your grandfather is right, my child. 'It is the truth; you cannot escape it;

either you must obey it, and it will lead you, or you must disobey it, and it will hang on you with the weight of a chain, which you will drag forever. It is not a thing of choice, it is a river that flows by the path of obedience. The higher life begins for us when we renounce our own will to bow before a Divine law!'"

Elizabeth felt a gleam of returning cheerfulness. She felt her heart already beginning to beat faster as she reflected, "They will all be surprised when they see how happy we will be. It was unkind in Grandpapa to speak as he did; I could not bear it if Otto were ever angry with me." She tried to fancy how his dear face would look disturbed by passion, but it was an impossibility. She could only see him as he looked that spring morning in the streets of Berlin, when he stood suddenly before her, his face tender with appealing love, and handed her the bunch of fragrant violets. The whole scene was so intensely vivid, as she recalled it, that it seemed like an illuminated picture held before her mental vision. It was a clear spring morning, so fresh, so beautiful, that as she tripped lightly along, her heart throbbed with the joy of existence. Merry children played along the sidewalks in the bright sunshine, their laughing voices and the very cries of the street blended in harmony. She heard them as from afar, her fancy busily weaving pleasing dreams of the future. Windows stood invitingly open to admit the entrance of the balmy spring air; every tint was light and

transparent; high overhead soft, fleecy clouds went scurrying over the vivid blue sky. "Over the old fir mountain," she smilingly thought, "rests the same glowing sunshine, the same fleecy clouds; he too, my stately lover, may be absorbed in the same delightful castle-building as I," when suddenly a vision floated before her eyes and the object of her reverie stood before her, "mute, but clothed in the beauty of love and youth," while the fragrant blossoms which he held, in a moment miraculously changed hands. With this vision before her it was no wonder that the words uttered by her wise grandfather were forgotten, and again as by a magician's spell she was transformed into the fairy princess whose prince had marvelously appeared, "and the dawn of an opening heaven lighted her soul with the glory of regions celestial."

Aged Frau Budmar looked from time to time at her watch. It was now half-past twelve o'clock, and Kadden was expected at eleven. "There he comes, and on foot; that is singular!" exclaimed the grandfather from his position at the open window. The old man advanced to meet the lieutenant, and as he extended his hand in welcome, said smilingly, "On foot, in all this heat?"

"I am almost ashamed to explain why I make my appearance thus. My military duties detained me longer than I anticipated when I promised to be at Woltheim at eleven o'clock. Thinking I could make up for lost time, I rode so madly that my steed fell under me as I spurred him across a

ditch; accordingly, I was compelled to stand beside the poor animal and await the arrival of my groom. Between us we managed to get him upon his legs, and I sent him limping on his way to Braunhausen; necessarily, I was forced to walk the rest of the road."

The old man smiled significantly, but cautiously refrained from saying what he thought, and hurriedly withdrew to apprise his daughter and her husband of his arrival.

The Geheimerath and his wife greeted the young officer cordially. Elizabeth was then called, and the betrothal duly solemnized.

When the young girl and von Kadden found themselves alone for the first time, they "stood looking at each other's faces with that sweet wonder that belongs to young love."

"Do you remember, Elizabeth," he said, in a low tone, "when we stood side by side beneath the picture of the cuirassier and his bride? That night I asked the dear God to give you to me as my wife."

Elizabeth's eyes grew radiant in their joy; her lips trembled and she whispered softly, "He has heard and answered your prayer, and we will thank Him like grateful children for his goodness, will we not?" she asked, looking into his face with appealing eyes.

"I will be a patient scholar," he answered, and there was a momentary pause.

"If in our ignorance we know not what to say,

we can, at least, repeat the prayer that our Lord has taught us," she said earnestly.

"I am not sure that I can recall the words," was his answer, "but I will try." And so they stood with their hands clasped like two children, each repeating the gracious words uttered upon earth by Divine Majesty, God manifest in the flesh, for the use of His earthly children. At the conclusion of the prayer she was in his arms; with passionate fondness he clasped her to his heart, and their betrothal became a sacrament.

The day was wondrously beautiful, and throughout the afternoon and evening the mansion at Woltheim stood hospitably open to welcome the kindred and friends, who, as customary, assembled for the feast of betrothal. Charlotte, the superstitious, assured the guests in turn that she had a premonition of this event from the evening of the day when Charles had wished for the cuirassier's presence to complete the resemblance to the portraits. Six times since then had she seen her sainted mother lying in her coffin, and *never* had she known, she emphatically affirmed, *that* sign to fail; a wedding was sure to follow.

Upon the subsequent day the Geheimerath returned to Berlin, taking with him the two students, Max and Karl, while Frau Kühneman remained at Woltheim a fortnight longer with the rest of the family. The bright May days passed all too quickly. Elizabeth was a charming *fiancée*, and the soldier, who had prized his insensate

wooden memorial as a connecting link with the love and home which he had never known, found his formal rigid life suddenly transformed into a blissful romance. Not the shadow of a cloud disturbed the serenity of the heaven of their love. The young officer was all gentleness to his betrothed, fulfilling every exacting demand that his light-hearted princess made upon him.

Frau Kühneman was a silent, watchful observer of the young man's demeanor; she assured her mother that she felt satisfied on one point at least, that he was of a thoroughly lovable nature; "But I wish," she added with a sigh, "that I were surer of his principles."

Elizabeth was as happy and as despotic as a queen; she had her own way in everything. With Kadden "the effort to please had the ease of novelty." "He will never change toward me," she proudly thought; and the mother's heart was completely won. She was touched with keen joy that he felt so strongly whatever her dear daughter felt; at the same time she laughingly advised him not to bend his will wholly to Elizabeth's. The young man plead so urgently however, saying "It makes me happier to worship than to be worshipped," that she was conquered, and the spoiling went on from day to day. He was Elizabeth's obedient subject, and the young pair were convinced that their happiness would flow on undisturbed forever, believing that if they loved one another "nothing could harm them, happen what might."

CHAPTER XIV.

AT the close of two weeks Kadden accompanied Elizabeth and her mother to Berlin, to undergo the trying ordeal of a formal presentation to the rest of the family.

The surprise over the announcement of Elizabeth's betrothal was genuine, and caused great consternation among some of the relatives and connections of the family. The Geheimerath communicated the intelligence to his sisters Wina and Paula, who loudly expressed their astonishment and disapprobation of the whole proceeding, and at once hastened to the General's to unburden themselves of their budget of news, and to receive the sympathy that they knew would be accorded them. They were not mistaken, and found in Emilie a ready and indignant ally.

"To choose the first eligible young man who presented himself!" said Wina, with scornful emphasis; "it is really the most incredible piece of absurdity that I ever heard of in my life."

"Yes, the very first eligible young man," echoed Emilie, "and one too who from his very profession, one may reasonably conclude, will lead his wife into worldly society; and Elizabeth is so impressionable that she will be as wax in his hands."

"He will take her away from Berlin. We had

looked forward to her marrying and settling here where we could enjoy her society," said Wina with a sigh.

"She had the opportunity of making a far more distinguished alliance in the Residence, for she is strikingly handsome; and then the rest of her family," said Paula, ingenuously, "could have had a share in her good fortune."

"The marriage should not have been decided upon until she was of age; she is so young," said Wina, with a profound sigh; "it is perfectly inexplicable to me how her mother could have permitted it."

"Yes, it is inexplicable to me also," added Emilie. "I cannot comprehend how so sensible a woman as Elise could have given up to Elizabeth's first girlish fancy; had an interview or engagement been forbidden, the inclination doubtless would have soon passed away."

"Elizabeth is nineteen years old," said the mother, "and although her choice is somewhat unfortunate, she is certainly able to discriminate, and, besides, is entitled to choose for herself; and from all that we have been able to learn, Herr Kadden enjoys an enviable reputation among his associates, and is certainly one of the most distinguished young officers in the service."

Emilie's color rose at these words of praise, and she hastened to speak, but reluctantly desisted upon receiving a remonstrant look from her mother, who was not disposed to let her daughter thus rashly

join forces with Elizabeth's irate aunts, with whom they had but little in common.

The two ladies took their departure, comforted by the thought that more of the family than they were not in sympathy with this marriage. As the aunts bade adieu, there was a fresh arrival—that of pastor Schlosser, to whom Emilie had been betrothed since the Easter festival. The principal theme of conversation, of course, was Elizabeth's unfortunate engagement. The young clergyman had little to say upon the subject, as he was not personally acquainted with Kadden; moreover, he was unwilling to countenance the wholesale condemnatory terms in which Emilie indulged when speaking of the objectionable fiancé. The young girl had thought and talked herself into a state of great irritation. Her lover earnestly exerted his influence to soothe her, but she was so absorbed in her indignation that Elizabeth's father and mother had countenanced so unequal a marriage, that it was with some trepidation that the young man attempted to bring her to an analysis of the personal feelings which she was permitting to influence her against one of whom she had but little knowledge. Arguments were in vain; his words made no impression upon her. Having satisfied his conscience, he no longer attempted to stem the tide of her prejudices, and took his departure, hoping that at some future time he would find her amenable to reason.

The summer passed in tranquil, undisturbed happiness; mutual visits were exchanged, and the

young officer was in Berlin, or Elizabeth with her grandparents in Woltheim, the latter not so often nor for so long a time as the young pair would have desired; but the mother was unwilling to be separated from her daughter; besides, Elizabeth must study cookery and domestic economy: hitherto she had had but little time to devote to these pursuits, her various studies having engrossed her attention. In this unexplored field the young girl now busied herself with eager assiduity. It was with unmixed satisfaction that she from time to time would report progress in this department and receive the congratulations of her betrothed upon her acquaintance with the subject. Her enthusiastic nature seemed absorbed by the single purpose of so acquitting herself in this office as to render herself worthy of being regarded a model housekeeper and an adept in household economy. The information which she acquired and which she sought to communicate was occasionally received in a different spirit from that she anticipated. One evening upon volunteering some ideas upon cookery in the presence of her father and Herr von Kadden, her self-satisfaction received a shock. "Coffee," she asserted didactically, "was decidedly better if but fifteen grains were taken for the drawing of three cups than if a greater number were used; that bread should not be eaten the day it was baked, and that butter would last much longer if allowed to stand some while to harden."

The young officer, looking at her with an expression of assumed horror, said with a provoking smile, "Your faith in your illusions is so perfect, Elizabeth, that I would not disturb it for the world; but I greatly fear that your culinary studies will have a direful influence upon my comfort. Henceforth I shall be expected to be satisfied with weak coffee, stale bread and strong butter. Desist, I pray you, in time, from any further lessons upon household economy. The outlook is neither a desirable nor a pleasant one for me." Turning to the Geheimerath, who had been listening in amused silence, he gravely asked, "How far does a woman's kingdom extend in these matters? Is the boundary always clearly defined? I ask for information, for I am grossly ignorant, and wish to be advised by one who has enjoyed years of experience."

"The culinary department," answered the Geheimerath in the same spirit, "is peculiarly the woman's province. Woe betide the man who infringes one jot upon the border of this kingdom. The right of petition is however accorded, and occasionally receives respectful consideration." Elizabeth, though provoked, could not help laughing as she reflected, "It would be well to know exactly how far the border of my kingdom *does* extend."

When Elizabeth was at Woltheim her grandmother questioned her now and again regarding the disposition of her time, which momentarily

occasioned her some pricks of conscience. She also talked with her in reference to her unlimited confidence in their yet untried affection for each other. "If we love one another," she argued speciously and triumphantly, "nothing surely can harm us, whatever mischances may happen."

"Do you ever read or speak upon serious subjects when together?" her grandmother asked.

"We have really not had time," was Elizabeth's answer; "but I have not neglected daily to thank the dear God for His goodness to me," she continued, "and when the excitement of preparation is over we will dispose of our time systematically, and will read together regularly."

"You are keeping up your studies in English, I suppose?" said Frau Budmar, pointedly.

"We have given up our English," responded Elizabeth, laughing. "We could never agree about the pronunciation, and as my teacher had been governess for so many years in the most distinguished families, I naturally thought *my* way was correct, whereas Otto insisted upon it that *he* was right. But, grandmamma," she added, deprecatingly, "when we found that it caused a slight difference between us, we concluded that it would be better and more reasonable for us to drop the study altogether."

"It would have been much more reasonable to have agreed to disagree, and have continued the study," said Frau Budmar. "Independence of opinion and perpetual disagreement between your

betrothed and yourself is not the way, my child, to keep the peace; opportunities for strife are always at hand. If you practice music together and do not agree, will you give that up also? If you take a walk and converse and your views happen to differ, will you be so *reasonable* as to give up walking with each other?"

"Grandmamma, do not imagine that we quarrelled," said Elizabeth, "it was only that we did not agree; it was all in jest; there was no necessity, I assure you, of my repeating a *Pater noster*," she added laughingly.

"I would advise you not to put that off too long," admonished her grandmother. "Little contradictions are ruinous to the peace of two persons so closely united as husband and wife. The next time there is a difference of opinion between you, if you cannot absolutely agree, be silent. You may as well learn to do so now as later on, Elizabeth. The impulse to differ can never be indulged in without causing feelings of temporary estrangement."

Elizabeth celebrated her nineteenth birthday upon the following October, parents and sisters participating in the festivities at Woltheim. At this time the month of May was decided upon as the date for the wedding, when the violets were in bloom. The house was also chosen, the furnishing and upholstering were discussed, "and all the preliminaries of marriage rolled smoothly along, shortening the months of courtship." Elizabeth

had permission to remain at Woltheim a fortnight after her parents and sisters returned to Berlin. This was to be her last long visit to her grandparents before her marriage. The earth was clad in its gorgeous autumnal robe, the days were calm and beautiful, "sunlight was woven into a soft network over the woods, and the leaves of the far beech trees shone through the hazy atmosphere like amber." Kadden came every noon and remained at Woltheim until evening. Each happy, blissful day passed all too quickly in walk or drive or social gayety at the Oberförsterei. Some visits were paid at intervals in Braunhausen, but Elizabeth did not find the society of the garrison town congenial, and there was consequently but little intercourse. Society felt somewhat sore at being ignored, and seemed disposed to assume an adverse and critical attitude towards the young pair.

"Kadden," began his friend Stottenheim, gravely, one day, "I feel it my duty as your friend to censure you. You have been for some time neglecting, indeed, I may say, ignoring your acquaintances in Braunhausen in so marked a measure that it will make it unpleasant for you and for your young bride when you settle down in our midst."

"I neglect them?" queried Kadden, in surprise.

"Yes, since your betrothal you have given us all up. I advise you, as a friend, that it is not wise to suffer yourself to be so completely absorbed and influenced by your *fiancée's* family. A man must preserve his individuality."

"I assure you," responded Kadden, laughing good-naturedly, "that it is entirely on my own account that I spend my leisure hours at Woltheim. It is pleasant and home-like there."

"You are a good fellow," said Stottenheim, paternally; "you suffer yourself to be inveigled without seeing the net that is spread for you. But however things are, surely it might give you pleasure to appear occasionally in our circle in company with your charming fiancé."

"My betrothed does not find the society congenial," replied Kadden, quickly.

"There we have it," cried Stottenheim. "Well, I must say, if she does not enjoy it, she should be willing, out of consideration and respect for you and your friends, to mingle occasionally with them. She wishes to monopolize all of your time and attention, that is the long and the short of it. You are expected to lead the life that is agreeable to *her*, while she cares nothing for *your* preferences. You should not let yourself be ruled by her. Assert yourself like a man, and let her know plainly that she too has duties to perform and preferences to give up. Submission should not be all upon one side."

Kadden's face flushed, but he could not deny that there was some truth in his friend's assertion. "Do not fancy that my betrothed is so unreasonable," said the young officer, attempting to treat the subject as a joke. "If it gives me more pleasure to be with her than in your company, you

must grant that I am only following my own personal predilections in spending so much of my time in Woltheim."

"You deceive yourself, but I can tell you that you cannot pull the wool over other people's eyes. For policy's sake you dare not ignore your friends in the garrison; and if the family at Woltheim try to induce you to do so, you must assert yourself. It will be best in the end that without any overt breach of the peace you now act as you think proper."

"Have you finished?" said the young officer, curtly.

The Lieutenant would have continued, but Kadden with a cool bow said ironically, "I thank you for your unsolicited advice, and I promise you all shall be arranged to your satisfaction."

There was a short pause, broken by Stottenheim saying in a good-humored tone, "I do not intend to become angry with you, Kadden. I considered it my duty to speak as I have done. I am older than you and have had more experience. You will have to live among us. The witching glamour that now environs you will pass away with your return to the petty details of life. Be wise in time, my friend. The pursuits which you have relinquished you will naturally desire to take up again, and you cannot be surprised if you meet averted faces and changed welcome."

"But I have not, nor do I intend to change my mode of life," said the young man eagerly.

Naturally I have adopted for the time being a different course. You will recognize that under the circumstances it could not be otherwise, but it will naturally right itself after I am married."

"I am satisfied with this answer," returned his friend, extending his hand. "Now one thing more, and I have done. Please me by accompanying us to the hunt to-morrow. The Colonel has invited you to return with him in his carriage; the dinner will be late, and the ride home at night upon horseback would not be agreeable."

The young man reflected a moment: unpleasant as the thought was, he knew it was true that he was no longer free to decide for himself. Elizabeth had only two more days to stay at Woltheim. Would she willingly let him devote one of them to the hunt? In the first place, she did not like him to engage in these sports because of his reckless equestrianism; then the jollity and merry-making attending them was a ready and effective objection which she never failed to make. "My betrothed will only be two more days at Woltheim," he said, making a spasmodic effort to recover himself, "you must certainly think it natural that I would prefer to be with her than to go to the chase."

"You are coming back to the old point," said Stottenheim; "it would be wiser for you to decide to go. You would thus convince your friends that you are not entirely under petticoat government. Still, you can do as you please."

"Nonsense," growled Kadden.

"Go, for my sake," pleaded Stottenheim; "I confess that I assumed the responsibility and accepted the invitation for you."

"Well," responded Kadden, resolutely, "I will go. I will not stay for the dinner; after the hunt is over I will ride to Woltheim."

The young officer was glad when the conversation came to an end. He did not ride at his usual break-neck speed. He could not hide from himself that he feared his little queen, accustomed to rule absolutely, would object to his acceptance of the invitation. "Will I give up," he soliloquized, "if she *should*? No, I must not do that," was his resolve. "I would far rather spend the day in her company than in the society of my comrades. Out of sheer weakness, I promised Stottenheim that I would go, through fear of what would be said. I deserve no credit for the resolve."

Strange, mingled with these thoughts came the remembrance of certain words of Herr Budmar's, which at the time had apparently made no impression upon him: "God's word is the only sure guide of action; it should govern us in the most trivial affairs of life, for life is made up of trifles." Reflecting thus, he approached Woltheim.

Elizabeth met him in buoyant spirits. She had ever some new ideas to communicate and suggestions to offer regarding the arrangement of their future home; to-day it was a window garden, which she intended should be a marvel of beauty; a chicken-coop must also be ready to accommodate

a colony of English chickens, which her Uncle Charles had given her. Inquiry was also made concerning the measurement of windows for the purchase of curtains. This commission Kadden, in his perturbation of spirit, had forgotten to attend to. When he pleaded forgetfulness, Elizabeth said, reproachfully, "Otto, you must not neglect to bring it to-morrow."

"That I will be unable to do," returned the young officer, with some misgivings, but resolved to have the unpleasant duty over as soon as possible.

"Why not?" she asked, quickly.

"I must be at Breitenfelde early to-morrow morning for the hunt."

She gazed at him in questioning surprise.

"I go very unwillingly," he said in answer to her look, "but go I must."

"Who compels you to go?" she asked.

"My friends wish it very much."

"But you know that I also very much do *not* wish it," she cried. "I do not understand how you could promise to go without first speaking to me about it."

"It was not agreeable for me to accept the invitation, but I hoped that you would permit it for love's sake," he said, with an effort at playfulness, lest his answer should only embitter the strife that seemed imminent. Her peremptory tone did not sound as amusing to the young officer as it had
in earlier differences.

"*Permit* it?" she repeated, scornfully; "you can do as you please."

Kadden's face flushed with anger. "Her manner and tone," he reflected, "are almost enough to disenchant me," but he remained silent.

"Only speak the truth, and confess that you do not go unwillingly," she continued, angrily. "A man should not permit himself to be forced into anything."

"I promised under protest," he said calmly, his eyes riveted upon her now shrinking face, "but your unbecoming language, Elizabeth, has made it much easier for me to accept."

"How can you speak in that way to me," she said, with a sob in her voice.

"Consider how you have spoken to *me*," was his brusque answer, as he turned away and joined her grandparents.

"This then is the boundary of your kingdom," was the young girl's first angry reflection; "to oblige his friends, he is discourteous to you."

She walked to the open window. The scent of the crushed and dying leaves upon the grassy sward oppressed her; the sunbeams lay so still about her, the few bright autumn leaves left upon the almost dismantled trees shone with a golden glow against the cloudless deep blue sky. Signs of decay were everywhere present. How silent, how desolate the earth looked! Even the late October garden flowers hung their withered heads; the low, mournful symphony of a few belated bees

was heard as they sought vainly to extract from the sapless flowers some sweets to add to their winter's store. Elizabeth thought of the bright May days when flowers and blossoms were scattered with such lavish profusion. Were "her budding hopes, transient bliss and bright memories" also withered?

"If *he* is unkind," she murmured, "can *you* not be happy?"

Elizabeth had never in her life felt so utterly miserable as at this moment. She could scarcely believe that such words had passed between them. She knew that she had been to blame, and this made her the more uncomfortable. She reconsidered her words, and felt heartily ashamed of them. "Yet," she speciously reasoned, "I have often spoken to him in as rude a manner as I have done to-day, and he has only laughed at my unreasonableness. He was not in a good humor at the time, but pride can avail but little when the soul is left desolate." The thought that he could ever change toward her was Elizabeth's first bitter experience. "This," she thought, with a sigh, "is one of the 'visible fruits of self-pleasing,'" but telling herself again that she had been treated unjustly, she concluded to wait and see if her lover would not seek her forgiveness.

During dinner there was pleasant general talk, but the keen, observant eye of the grandfather had noticed with some anxiety that all was not as it should be between Elizabeth and her betrothed.

When the morrow was alluded to, Kadden embraced the opportunity to mention casually that he had accepted an invitation to go to the hunt at Breitenfelde upon the following day. "This, then, is the cause of the coolness," thought the shrewd old man, and he felt pleased that Elizabeth had met with a check to her growing love of rule.

"It is delightful sport," he said pleasantly, turning toward the young man, "and this is splendid weather for it."

"I have no idea of staying for the dinner," said Kadden.

"Why not?" interposed Herr Budmar in surprise, "the dinner accompanying the chase is not always as good as one would wish, but at Breitenfelde you may be sure of a good one."

"Yes, that is so, but I have never enjoyed these dinners; the guests are too noisy to please me," he added sincerely.

"I am glad to hear you say so," said Frau Budmar, "we women do not fancy gentlemen-dinners."

After coffee the grandparents left the apartment and the young people retired to the seclusion of the garden-room, where Elizabeth as usual busied herself with her needlework, while the young officer read aloud to her. Kadden composedly took the book and opening it asked quietly, "Shall I read, Elizabeth?" She inclined her head and the reading commenced. The young girl felt utterly miserable as she sat near her betrothed, and he did not as usual raise his eyes with the well-known look of

sympathy. She recalled the former happy times only to make her feel the more troubled. She could bear it no longer. Suddenly she laid her hand gently upon the book and said tremulously, "Dear Otto, do not read any more." He lifted his eyes from the page and looked at her with an inquiring expression, but at the same time with a hope that this estrangement, so painful, was about to end. He had no inclination to resist her imploring gaze. Tearfully she poured forth her penitence. Her self-accusing words affected him strangely. "Striving to leave room for nothing but pardon in his heart," she prayed him as a just punishment for her culpable conduct that he would remain at Brietenfelde for dinner.

Upon bidding adieu to Elizabeth that evening the young officer said tenderly, "I do not think that I shall go to the hunt to-morrow; we have only one more day to spend together."

"I pray you go," she said with earnestness, "it would cause me the keenest pain if you did not."

"I will not decide yet," he responded with a cheerful laugh.

When he had swung himself into the saddle and she had clasped his hand for the last time, she said playfully but seriously, "You dare not return before to-morrow evening, Otto."

Early upon the following morning Stottenheim made his appearance. "You are going with us?" he asked at once.

"I really do not know whether I shall go or not.

"I have not decided," responded Kadden, with a laugh.

"You have not received permission, I suppose," said the Lieutenant, shaking his head knowingly.

"On the contrary, if I go, I do so by the express command of my betrothed." Stottenheim looked at him in surprise. "And Herr Budmar insisted that I should remain for the dinner," he added.

"So!" exclaimed the astounded friend; then said warmly, "I will be delighted if you will go, old fellow."

Kadden ordered his groom to see that his horse was ready for an early start.

Upon the following morning Elizabeth set out for a long walk. The pure, dewy air was fresh but motionless; the sun shone, but its brightness was veiled; "over the distance lay a lovely haze, like that which hope weaves over the future." As she sauntered listlessly along, she almost hoped against hope that her lover would give up the chase, and in spite of her express command would come to meet her. All day long she waited, her dejection increasing as the hours dragged their weary length; but he came not. When the sun went down behind the fir mountain she turned sadly away, but had scarcely entered the avenue when she heard the sound of horse's hoofs. Turning, she saw in the distance a horseman approaching as upon the wings of the wind.

Why did she shrink, in place of rejoicing at his appearance? Ah! the petty angry thoughts

which she had been struggling against all day rose again in her breast, but he drew nearer and she must resolve how she would meet him. She felt ashamed of her irritation. Standing a moment with hands clasped convulsively together, she breathed reverently in quick ejaculatory prayer: "Oh! Lord, I would fain do better, *be* better. If I cannot be meek and lowly for my own sake, for Otto's sake, help me to be so for Thy dear sake," and suddenly, to her unquiet heart a voice said, "Peace, be still," and the command was instantly obeyed.

The young officer dismounted and held the reins loosely in his hand as he stood by her side. She looked lovingly into his eyes.

"You do not know, Elizabeth, how I have longed to be with you to-day," he said fervently.

"I too," was the gentle, tremulous answer.

"Do you know, dearest," he said, "that I was strongly tempted to give up the chase and spur my horse straight to Woltheim?"

She could not speak, but leaned upon his shoulder in answer, while he bowed his head and looked inquiringly into her eyes. Yes, they were suffused with tears.

Bending down a swaying branch near by, he asked, "Do you remember, Elizabeth, how the ice flowers came loose from the bough and fell upon the ground? These leaves were then ensheathed in the small brown buds. Now they fall unheeded from the stem, but beneath each severed leaf lie other buds of promise.

"And the sunshine and the rain, and the beautiful blue expanse of heaven is over them all, and in due time will entice them from their gloomy winter casings," she interposed with child-like enthusiasm; "I love the deep blue sky, and the longer I gaze into its tranquil depths the lighter and more peaceful is my heart."

"Blue is faith's own peculiar color."

"And faith is more beautiful than love," she interrupted quickly.

Kadden walked thoughtfully by her side, conscious that she was not the same—that a change had passed over the light-hearted, childlike spirit of the young girl.

Silently they walked along the avenue until they reached the huge chestnut tree, whose far-reaching branches had scattered upon path and grassy sward a profusion of gorgeous colored leaves; the last slanting beams of sunlight fell athwart the birchen bench that stood at its foot with so golden a glow, that involuntarily the young man paused, and throwing the reins over a bough, took Elizabeth's hands in his and led her to the seat. They sat long and silently; the shadows lay upon the grass, and the foliage was tinged with the many hues of sunset and autumn.

From the shadow of the sheltering branches she gazed upon the lovely scene, but her soul was "out of tune with the harmonies of nature." Pressing her hands between his own, he gazed inquiringly into her liquid eyes, saying, "Elizabeth, there is something the matter; tell me what it is."

The question was so unexpected that her enforced calmness forsook her. She could no longer restrain her tears. He plead earnestly with her to speak, but she could not. "Am I the cause of these tears?" he tenderly asked. Then she poured forth her confessions of the ungenerous feelings she had been indulging throughout the day, and her penitence for the same. It was not, she said, that she had ceased to love him, but that she was unworthy of his love. "But now," she said ingenuously, "that I have confessed my fault, I am happy."

For answer he imprinted a fervent kiss upon the clear, pure brow, then led her to the house where the grandmother was impatiently awaiting their return.

Elizabeth was again in Berlin, and Kadden attending to his duties at Braunhausen. The inclement weather kept Elizabeth within doors. And the young officer went through his round of rigid duties with monotonous regularity. The roads were practically impassable and neither riding nor walking could be indulged in, and as he had not leave of absence before Christmas, he could not visit Berlin.

Naturally the pursuits which the young man had relinquished during the summer and autumn were again resumed. He dined with his young comrades, he joined as before in the general talk of promotions in the various Regiments, of horses, dogs,

and the excitements of the chase. Stottenheim, diffuse as ever, came as usual to his room and remained for hours, and his comrades visited him to be entertained. Since the young officer's coming to Braunhausen, his quarters had been the general gathering place, for although he was by nature reticent and grave, he was large-hearted and generous. Rarely a day passed that his groom did not raise the lid of the walnut chest and take from its damask store a snow-white cloth with which to cover it, and serve therefrom in free-hearted hospitality viands to tempt the appetite of his many and appreciative guests. Also the various married officers' families had to be visited, and quite often Kadden found himself, as of old, at the Colonel's. Contrary to the predictions of his friend Stottenheim, Frau Bonsak and her eldest daughter looked forward with pleasure to the coming of the prospective Frau von Kadden, and kindly interested themselves in preparations for her arrival. Adoline was now so engrossed with new sensations that she had long forgotten the predilection she had formerly entertained for the young officer.

Elizabeth's bouyant nature soon put aside the dreary experience of the autumn; her heart was full of sunshine and gladness. Her betrothed's letters were tender and withal so earnest and manly that her esteem and reverence for him deepened daily. She read between the lines many an earnest sentiment which his reticence had but partially expressed. Her letters also were a revelation to

the young man—so unreserved, so child-like were they, whether they spoke of the dawn of their coming happiness, or in the expressions of love and fealty with which they abounded. His heart was deeply moved. The peculiar childlikeness of her nature fascinated him. “He gave himself up wholly to the anticipation of coming happiness; his steadfast faith knew no tremor, his bright hope no dimness, his perfect love no fear.”

CHAPTER XV.

THE weeks glided away slowly, but not unpleasantly. Christmas had come, and the young officer hastened to the Residence to spend the holidays with his betrothed. The weather was charming. "Nature made sweet amends for the unkindly days which had preceded." The young pair enjoyed many a pleasant walk together during these blissfully happy days, exchanging visits of ceremony with the various branches of the Kühneman connection. The Geheimerath's immediate family became much attached during this interval to the young Lieutenant; the mother particularly recognized his many attractive qualities, and loved him as though he were in truth her son. She observed with inward gratification that whenever Elizabeth in her playful tyranny encroached too far upon his dignity, or waywardly sought to coerce him into entertaining similar views with herself, he gently but firmly maintained his own opinion, and exercised upon her lovely but wilful nature an admirable influence. She looked up to him with a genuine reverence, very much out of character with her former self. How greatly the incidents of the past autumn contributed towards the attainment of this end was not apparent to the young couple themselves.

When in the presence of the critical Emilie, he

with lover-like devotion submitted to Elizabeth's playful assumption of superiority, one look into the sweet eyes was all that was needed to cause her to desist; for in spite of her wilfulness her nature was affectionate and sensitive in the extreme. The young man was withal so considerate in his correction of this fault that one would not suppose by his manner that he had anything to do with Elizabeth's responsiveness. One eye, however, thoughtful and acute, observed with pleasure the influence Kadden was exercising upon the young girl's character, and this person was Pastor Schlosser.

The two young men, although dissimilar in character, felt a peculiar attraction for each other. Emilie, on the contrary, was absolutely detestable to the Lieutenant. Upon every occasion in which they found themselves in each other's company, there was a consciousness on both sides of the strongest repugnance. Von Kadden was not always able to keep his temper in check, and an open expression of the discordant feelings which she always caused in his breast was ever imminent. There was no love lost between them, for Emilie on her part thoroughly disliked the young officer.

Smarting from the effects of such an encounter, he unburdened himself one day when alone with the Geheimerathin. "Poor Schlosser!" he said with a profound sigh, "I pity him from the bottom of my heart. How can he be happy with such a woman? She would drive me insane."

"We must bear with one another's faults, Otto," she replied quietly.

"I defy any one to be patient with her," he hastily interposed.

"Her betrothed has patience with her."

"God help him!" responded Kadden, fervently.

Frau Kühneman could not repress a smile, but embraced the opportunity to speak plainly to him upon his unreasonable aversion. She could not consistently with truth undertake Emilie's defence, but she spoke of her good qualities. "You do not do her justice, Otto. She is by nature self-sacrificing to an exceptional degree; her church work and her labors for charity's sake are carried on with an earnest, indefatigable zeal that deserves the highest praise. She is aware of the hardness and sharpness of her disposition, and struggles bravely to curb it."

"I am willing to retract if I have done her a wrong," said the young man, "but it seems to me that her conduct is influenced by philosophy rather than religion. To her, 'religion is nothing but a cold, hard unbending system.'"

At this moment Elizabeth entered the room and the subject was dropped.

Upon the morning following New Year's Day the young officer and Elizabeth paid some parting visits, being careful not to overlook Kadden's lonely old aunt, whose companionship was limited to that of her three faithful dogs. The young girl had made her acquaintance soon after her betrothal, and had paid several calls in accordance with her duty as her nephew's fiancée. The old

lady was greatly pleased by her attention, and assured her that she was undecided whether she did not love her charming niece better than her beloved Diana.

As they retraced their steps through the cold, foggy streets, in the deepening dusk of evening, they recalled the time when they had taken that memorable walk in the days of their early acquaintance. Elizabeth blushing related how anxious she had been about his ride to Braunschhausen through the darkness of that autumn night, and how she had grieved over his confession of want of faith in all that she held so sacred and so dear. The young man's heart was touched; he felt how fully her ardent nature confided in him, and hoped that he might prove worthy of her trust. The peaceful, joyous Christmas festival which he had experienced for the first time in his life in the midst of a Christian family circle had not been without its salutary effect upon his heart. He had been permitted a glimpse into that mysterious world that lies so near each one of earth's children, the beauty of which no finite heart can conceive, whose Holy City has no need of the sun neither of the moon to shine in it, for the Lamb is the Light thereof, the Christ Child whose advent they so devoutly and lovingly celebrated.

After accompanying Elizabeth to her home, Kadden made a call upon Pastor Schlosser. The young clergyman welcomed him warmly.

"Will I disturb you?" asked Kadden, hesitat-

ingly. "I see that you are busy. I have a favor to ask of you, and will detain you only a moment."

Herr Schlosser gave him an inquiring look.

"I wish you to deliver the address upon the occasion of our marriage."

"Suppose it were not to your liking?" he responded laughingly.

"Try me," said Kadden, "and see if your views do not agree with my own upon the subject."

The clergyman answered that he would give it his consideration, and at the same time assured him of the esteem with which he had from the first regarded him.

"I regret," said the officer warmly, "that I will be deprived of the pleasure and profit of your society."

The young man impulsively extended his hand. Kadden grasped it with a warm pressure. "I will inform you confidentially," said he, "that in all probability I will be installed pastor to the church in Wandstadt, which is only the second rail-road station from Braunhausen. One of the pleasures to which I look forward is that I will frequently meet both you and your wife. Should all things prove propitious, God willing, I expect to be married this coming summer."

After some general talk the young men bade a cordial *Wiedersehen*, and the pleasant intercourse for the time came to an end.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE days hastened away with noiseless flight ; the joyous Easter time had come and gone. May, the month of blossoms and of violets, was here. The day was beautiful. Sparrows twittered and chirped beneath the windows as they hopped merrily upon the grassy sward. Flocks of doves went skimming and wheeling about the gables of the ancient mansion, "their silver wings fluttering in the pure transparency of the air." There was fullness of life in the old gray house, for its spacious rooms were arrayed in holiday dress, in celebration of the marriage of Elizabeth, the beloved grandchild.

In a solemn conclave held by Herr and Frau Budmar and the family at the Oberförsterei, it was decided that owing to the circumscribed limits of the house in Berlin, the hospitable portals of Woltheim should be thrown "open as day and the hearts of its owners." This conclusion met with the unqualified approval of the Geheimerath and his good wife. Accordingly upon this bright May morn extensive preparations were being made in the ancestral mansion, whose rooms resounded with the merriment of children and the confusion of the preliminaries of the festival.

The house and its occupants were in such dis-

order that Elizabeth, as was customary, not being permitted to take part in the preparations for her wedding, gladly left the confusion behind her and wended her way into the garden which lay so full of peace and fragrance in the spring sunshine. Restlessly she wandered through the bright leafy avenue until she came to the familiar pathway that led to the fir height. Here she paused and with expectant ear listened for the quick tramp of her lover's steed. Full soon horse and rider came into view. The young officer, swinging himself from the saddle, hastened to clasp her in his arms and press her tenderly to his heart, thinking the while, "I will shield my sweet May flower from every rude breath that blows." The Lieutenant's groom took the reins from his master's hand, and Elizabeth proposed, as it was so noisy in the house, that they should walk to the fir mount. This suggestion meeting with her lover's unqualified approval, soon they were strolling along the path taken so many long years ago by their now aged predecessors.

Upon reaching the summit they seated themselves upon the self-same spot where the aforetime cuirassier and his bride had rested upon the morning of *their* wedding day, and in the bright spring sunshine gazed meditatively down upon the glittering turrets of Braunhausen, their future home.

So passed the morning away, "for in fairyland there is no measurement of time." When they had retraced their steps and reached the house it was full time to dress. Elizabeth had asked as an

especial favor that all should be excluded from this ceremony save her mother and grandmother. There in the girl Elise's old room the young bride and her dear attendants were for the last time alone together before the final leave-taking. Like a submissive child she was adorned for her marriage, and listened to loving, earnest words. At length she was ready, and the bridegroom was bidden enter; he gazed upon her as she stood in calm delight, with that exquisite self-consciousness which rises under the gaze of an admiring love, and drew her to his bosom as something to be kept with all the truth and tenderness of an abiding love.

Together they descended the staircase and took their places in the carriage, and still Elizabeth was as one who dreamed. The curious crowds who gazed upon them as the gay cavalcade passed through the little village, the impressive address, the ceremony, the nuptial benediction, her husband by her side, the gayly-dressed throng of kindred and friends, were all as parts of the panorama which passed before her mental vision. After the wedding feast, when the numerous company had dispersed throughout the rooms of the old mansion, Elizabeth and her husband wandered through the pleasant garden, and under the open sky she slowly came to herself.

Upon their return to the house she was for the first able to participate in the animated talk, and the gayety that surrounded her. She was gentleness to each; past differences were forgotten, her

loving heart went out with a child-like spontaneity of affection to each one of the dear ones from whom she would soon be separated. She took sage counsel with captious Aunt Julchen concerning household affairs—for was she not to enjoy the privilege of a maid brought up under the critical eye of this paragon of housewives?

Pastor Schlosser, aware of the preoccupation of the young pair during the delivery of his charge, now handed it to the groom, with the request that he and his bride should read it together upon the following Sabbath. The clergyman was so warm and fraternal in his manner to the young couple as to displease his betrothed, who inwardly chafed under it, while she marveled how a minister of God could countenance so unequal a marriage. No one, not even *he*, she bitterly reflected, speaks to her of the deep solemnity of the vows she has so lightly assumed. With a sensation of disgust Emilie had listened to the flatteries and openly avowed admiration of the bride by Elizabeth's two old aunts. "How dare they," she thought, "let that frivolous child depart with her fond, foolish hopes of earthly bliss, without one word of advice or of warning."

Unaware of her cousin's feelings, the happy bride advanced toward Emilie, and with an approach to her natural gayety, said jestingly, "I hope I inspire you with proper respect to-day, for I am married and you are only betrothed."

"The fact that you are married does not entitle

you to my respect," said Emilie, coldly. "If you could lift the veil of the future and prove yourself the model you would fain have us believe you to be, I would then accord you my respect."

"Dear cousin," returned Elizabeth, momentarily pained, "you surely would not intentionally spoil my holiday."

"Every day is a holiday to you, Elizabeth," responded Emilie, with bitterness in her tone. "I know not what day *you* consider the one on which to think of what is necessary to your future peace and your eternal welfare."

"You have no confidence in my earnestness of purpose," said Elizabeth indignantly. It was hard for the happy bride to listen to her cousin's cool proclamation of her shortcomings. "You wrong me by your suspicions; you cannot look into my heart."

"You deceive your own heart," said Emilie, "you think of nothing but of enjoying the present, but your happiness cannot be lasting if you continue to look at life as lightly as you do now."

Elizabeth's lovely face lost its merry light, tears came into her bright eyes; bravely she repressed the bitter retort that rose to her lips as she turned quickly away.

After the bridal dress had been exchanged for the travelling suit, it fell to Aunt Wina's lot to place the first little *coiffe* upon the lovely youthful head. The young officer was standing by her side, and the maiden aunt determined to profit by this favor-

able opportunity to express her views upon marriage and the inestimable value of woman's love. She had only begun her oration when the door opened and the Lieutenant's groom stood bowing deferentially upon the threshold. "Your pardon, gracious lady," he said with *empressement*, "shall I carry your luggage to the carriage?"

Elizabeth started, blushed with pleasure, then smilingly looked up at her husband, and gave the requisite orders. Aunt Wina's studied speech was postponed for a further hearing, the young couple took their places in the carriage, and Elizabeth, smiling through her tears, threw a glance of parting love to the dear familiar faces which she left desolate upon the grassy lawn at old Woltheim.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE joyous wedding festival was satisfactorily over, the guests had departed to their several homes, and the aged occupants of hospitable Woltheim had a leisure interval to recuperate from the unwonted excitement that had dominated the household for days previous to and after the wedding.

The first few weeks had passed in the new dwelling ; Elizabeth, with characteristic ardor, devoted herself to her household duties, playing her part with no little self-satisfaction as mistress of the little house in Braunhausen. Calls of ceremony had been made upon the young couple by the officers and the ladies of the garrison, but the first and the dearest by far of all the guests were the grandparents. The aged pair were escorted by the important young wife from cellar to attic ; every room in succession must pass under their admiring inspection. The keen, observant eye of the grandfather noted that the large Bible lay among the wedding gifts all undisturbed on a side-table in the drawing-room ; in passing he instinctively had drawn his hand over its cover, but wisely refrained from remark. Elizabeth observed the action, and quickly and deprecatingly said, "Grandpapa, I really have not neglected reading daily in my book

of devotion." The old man said nothing, but smiled indulgently upon the sweet, pleading face of his favorite grandchild. At the supper table, contrary to the custom that prevailed at Woltheim, a *silent* grace was offered, and still the wise old man kept his own counsel. This point had been gravely discussed by Elizabeth and her husband. After mature deliberation they arrived at the conclusion that it would be better to ask a silent blessing. It was hard for Elizabeth to assent to her husband's wishes in this matter; her education had been in a marked degree religious, and she conscientiously felt that by so doing they were slighting an important duty; but she comforted herself with the thought that it was not of vital moment—she must respect her husband's views upon the subject. Accordingly a silent grace had become their custom. Upon the first morning in their new life, when the maid servant, who had been used to the assembling of the entire household at the Oberförsterei for family prayer, asked Elizabeth concerning its observance, the young wife with heightened color informed her that her husband had decided to postpone the duty for a time, and that meanwhile each one would personally engage in his own devotions until household affairs were moving along with more system than they were at present.

Elizabeth had for some time limited herself, in her devotional readings, to a few verses daily in her text book; but upon the morning following

the visit of her grandparents, she removed the Bible from its resting-place upon the side table and laid it upon her writing-desk. Seating herself before it, she reverently opened the Book, and in the stillness of the early morning, and in the quiet of her room, strengthened herself by its holy counsels and its comforting truths, before the distractions of the coming day had power to keep her from this duty. She knew that she had been blameworthy in neglecting this religious exercise, and inwardly resolved that she would let nothing in the future interfere with its observance; fervently she prayed, "Help me, my God! in this my good purpose and in Thy holy service, and grant that I may now this day begin perfectly, for that which I have done hitherto is as nothing."

Upon Sabbath afternoon, Kadden, to Elizabeth's great delight, would occasionally read a few verses in the Bible. If he only held the open book upon his lap, on one pretext or another, the child-wife would make some excuse for sending the maid into the room, so that she might see with her own eyes that her master was a God-fearing man, although he did not engage in family worship. "Who knows," reflected Elizabeth, "but she may be catechised by inquisitive Aunt Julchen?"

The intercourse with Kadden's friends was resumed, but with discretion. The Colonel's family at first assumed a protectorate over Elizabeth. Their courtesies and counsels were showered upon her lavishly. But the young housekeeper at once

placed herself upon the defensive, and resented Frau Bonsak's dictation and authoritative interference in her domestic affairs. The sage counsel of experience was not valued by the young housewife, and the Colonel's lady, seriously offended, withdrew her patronage.

Elizabeth found it still harder to repress the obtrusive advances of the Commandant's daughters, who found the young household so interesting that they determined to establish themselves upon a permanent footing as confidential friends of the family. The young wife particularly and strongly objected to the impertinent forwardness of Adolfine, whose manner to Von Kadden and herself irritated her extremely. The idle, gossiping girls intruded upon her at all hours, and upon the most trivial pretexts. The incessant stream of chit-chat went on day after day without intermission. Upon several occasions her husband had, greatly to her annoyance, plainly expressed his opinion, apparently oblivious of his wife's antagonistic views upon the same subject. Elizabeth, sensitive to even a shadow of reproach, was deeply wounded, and always evinced by her heightened color the mortification she felt. This ever brought Adolfine's searching, critical eyes upon her: she was conscious of being misunderstood. This was not calculated to soothe the depressed spirits of poor Elizabeth, who from childhood had been accustomed to be petted, spoiled and flattered by her friends. Adolfine, taking advantage of these moods, with an

arch look, apparently in playful *naïveté* would direct the young officer's attention to them, saying that he was an autocrat, a domestic tyrant, who made life a martyrdom to his bride. It was an impossibility to suppress the foolish girl's volatile spirits; her activity knew no bounds; private theatricals, musical entertainments, social gatherings, were ever in procedure or in contemplation, and she insisted upon Elizabeth's taking part in each and every festivity. But here the young husband drew the line, and expressed his views with plainness regarding this incessant merry-making, adding that his wife had neither the leisure nor inclination for such amusements. Elizabeth heartily agreed to this arrangement, for she was tired of their shallow familiarities.

The weather was charming, and the young pair enjoyed many pleasant walks together; but as the Lieutenant preferred taking his exercise upon horse-back rather than afoot, he resolved, greatly to Elizabeth's delight, that she should accompany him upon his daily drives. During the past summer she had frequently mounted Kadden's beautiful brown horse, now fully broken for the side-saddle, and accompanied by the old groom, had ridden as far as the Oberförsterei. Upon her first mount, apparelled in her new black riding-habit, house and court were thrown into a state of the greatest excitement. Frederick flatteringly congratulated Elizabeth upon her elegant appearance, and assured the Fraülein that she resembled his

Gracious Lady more than ever, and that he fully expected she would prove to be as skilled and as graceful a rider as his mistress had been.

The young wife accompanied her husband upon numerous short excursions in the vicinity of the garrison. She, however, felt but little confidence upon horse-back, and did not enjoy the exercise as much as she had hoped to do. She was surprised at her own timidity; her husband had but little sympathy with her fears. He must always ride at her side, bridle in hand. Jestingly, but to Elizabeth's great annoyance, he held up Adolfine, who was a graceful and fearless horsewoman, as an example worthy of her imitation. Poor Elizabeth was compelled to confess that she never mounted the horse without a quickened throbbing of the heart, and during the ride found herself in a state of unpleasant excitement. "It is only a pleasure to you in imagination," said her husband regretfully, but he added, "you *should* overcome this cowardice, Elizabeth; for you are just as safe upon horse-back as though you were upon solid earth; the animal is so gentle and intelligent that you can control him easily." In order to convince her, he insisted that she should make the attempt to ride alone, saying that every new effort would inspire her with fresh courage. Kadden persuaded, urged, then peremptorily ordered that she should do as he desired, but all in vain. At length, becoming provoked at her seeming obstinacy, he rudely told her that he would never ride with her again. Silently they rode back to the house.

When her husband assisted her to dismount, his irritation had subsided and the cloud had lifted from his brow, but Elizabeth's wounded pride could not so readily forgive him for his rough speech. She hurried along the hall, up the staircase to her own room, locked the door, and sitting down in her riding-habit re-considered his words: "I will not ride with you again." He had never spoken to her before in such discourteous terms; both the tone and the words were an offence to her. "It is natural," she argued, "that I should feel as I do, and he need not be offended or surprised at it." As her irritation somewhat subsided, her heart had leisure to listen to that "soft sudden whisper of truth which steals upon us so often when we have forgotten duty and silenced conscience, and is surely none other than the voice of our guardian angel pleading with us." She felt that it was wrong to indulge in resentful feelings for a speech uttered in sudden anger. Words that she had once unheedfully read, now came with sudden force to her remembrance: "The plant of love being tended and cherished will bear its natural fruit, which is the beauty of life in this world and the promise and foretaste of it for the next." She did not know how long she had been in her room until she was startled by her husband knocking at the door. She rose hastily and changed her dress, for it was near dinner time.

It was five o'clock; Elizabeth sat meditatively before her writing-desk. She had been alone the

entire afternoon for the first time in her young wifehood. At dinner she had been moodily silent, and her husband, finding it irritating and uncomfortable to remain at home, had contrary to custom gone out. Elizabeth expected that he would soon return, and had decided to receive him in a more kindly spirit. Taking her needle-work she went into the garden, and seating herself in the jessamine arbor, occupied herself diligently with her sewing; but her anxiety would not permit her to sit long inactive, she rose and paced restlessly up and down the walk. And now another long hour had passed. Leaving the garden, she entered the stable, and going into the stall carressingly stroked the glossy brown neck of the beautiful animal, who whinnied his pleasure. "You are not to blame for our disagreement," she whispered, "your mistress is the guilty one, not you, you gentle creature." Passing again into the garden, "she gave a peculiar call which her little family of white chickens recognized," and soon came flocking and fluttering around her. She saw them safely within their enclosure for the night, then busied herself about various trifles to pass away the time, until the inexorable stroke of the clock, announcing the hour of seven, was "like a throb of pain to sensations made keen by a sickening fear."

Supper was ready, long ready, and still her husband had not returned; eight o'clock struck, and Elizabeth could bear to be in the house no longer.

Again she wandered into the garden and listlessly turned in at the wicket gate that opened through a low thick hedge to a grassy meadow beyond, mechanically following the narrow path that led to a blossoming field of rye. Here it was still and tranquil; she scarcely heeded whither she went, but felt a kind of satisfaction in the thought that she was the only one astir in this quiet spot. The evening sunshine bathed wood and grass and field in a marvelous golden light; larks trilled their sweet songs high up in the pure transparent air; corn flowers, red poppies and asters, were "glowing in their evening splendors; it was a vast expanse of brilliant, glowing color." Elizabeth gazed entranced, upon the beautiful picture; she had not the heart to pluck the flowers, "They are so fresh, so lovely, they would only wither in my hot hand," she sighed. "I too might be as lovely and as pure as they, so that all hearts would rejoice in my presence." Gazing up into the depths of the clear blue evening sky, she ejaculated, "Dear God, forgive me. My sad heart can turn to Thee. Thou art ever kind and forgiving. Strengthen me to do right." As she clasped her hands convulsively, she involuntarily touched her wedding ring and with a sob, continued, "Upon Thy heart of love I can lean, even if the visible love for which I have forgotten Thee fails me. Such long, long hours to leave me all alone," she murmured, as the sense of isolation again overcame her. "How can I be happy or cheerful? Dear

Lord! help, for vain is my own will to help me." She sat amidst the blossoming rye and the brilliant flowers, waiting until the last ray had gilded tree and field and flower, then wandered slowly home like a tired child.

It was late twilight within the little room. Lighting the lamp, she seated herself at her writing-desk, and, opening the Bible, read the Sermon on the Mount. Then, burying her face in her hands, she thought, "I will wait here until ten o'clock." In silent expectation she sat, but when she heard the closing of the door and her husband's quick tread as he hastened up the staircase, her heart gave a great throb. Trembling, she awaited his entrance. Her first thought was to close the lids of the open Bible which lay before her. She would be kind, but she could not let him know the secret emotions of her heart. *That* he did not deserve. She had raised her hand to close the book, when she heard in her heart the still small voice of the Lord saying reprovingly, "Obedience is better than sacrifice; humble thyself in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift thee up."

The young officer stepped quickly over the threshold; involuntarily he paused and remained standing in the open doorway. By the lamp's faint gleam he saw his wife, the open Bible before her, and recognized with a pang that she had fled to the almighty, protecting arm and loving heart of her heavenly Friend for the help and comfort which *he* had denied her. Again the Spirit of God moved his

heart. Elizabeth rose and with outstretched hand advanced to meet him, as though by her approach she would prevent any further strife between them. Recovering himself with an effort, her husband, still keeping her hand clasped in his, said, "Forgive me for leaving you so long. Say that you forgive me, Elizabeth," he repeated, for she could not speak at first. The tears repressed so long gushed forth; she kept back nothing, but told him of her impatience, her grief, her repentance, and the lessons that the wild flowers had taught her as she considered their loveliness and purity.


Kadden explained his protracted absence; he had been with Stottenheim, he said, and had been over-persuaded to remain and spend the afternoon with him and the rest of his comrades. They bantered him about being in leading strings so long, and jestingly congratulated him upon his release from bondage. They went to the coffee garden, and he could not leave without giving offense, and reluctantly had consented to spend the evening in their company as of old.

The next morning when Elizabeth arose, her husband had already ridden forth to the accustomed military exercise. When she entered the living-room she saw standing upon her writing-desk a vase of cornflowers, red poppies and white asters—so lovely and so fresh they looked, as they greeted her with a bright Good-morning. With tear-dimmed eyes and thankful heart, she bowed her head over them and softly whispered, "I thank

Thee, Father, that Thou hast heard and answered my prayer even in this little thing. How would it have been with me to-day if I had not striven to overcome my sinful pride?"

"Our life is made up of trifles, and the Evil One oft betrays our weak hearts through these apparently trivial things. It is forgiveness that makes the sense of a fault everlasting, the memory of it indelible."

It was high noon, the accustomed hour, and Elizabeth's expectant ear caught the first strains of martial music in the distance, as she hastened to the window. Soon the clatter of horses' hoofs was heard, and the troop of Cuirassiers swept past, their arms and magnificent equipments glittering in the rays of the mid-day sun. Drawing back the curtain, the young wife looked from the casement, and received with glad heart the greeting that was ever awaiting her from the handsomest cuirassier of them all.



CHAPTER XVIII.

EMILIE'S wedding was to be celebrated at mid-summer, Herr Schlosser having succeeded, to the gratification of the family, in securing the desired pastorate. Elizabeth and her husband embraced this opportunity for paying their first visit to Berlin since their marriage. It was a great pleasure to the young wife to mingle once more in the home circle. There was but little change in her as yet; less girlish perhaps and more womanly, but with the same buoyant spirits, as when she left her girlhood's home—as hasty also as ever with the follies and weaknesses of her two maiden aunts, and as outspoken on all occasions in the expression of her opinion to old folk and to young alike, for our heroine was no respecter of persons.

“Elizabeth's besetting sins, obstinacy and imperiousness, are more observable than ever,” said Emilie to her betrothed one morning, after the arrival of the young pair. Of late, through Pastor Schlosser's influence, she had grown more lenient in her judgment of others, and had exerted herself to be agreeable in her intercourse with the members of the Kühneman family. Accordingly the aforetime hostile young officer reversed his decision, and concluded that his valued friend stood

some chance of happiness in his marriage with the strong-minded Emilie.

Kadden had also risen greatly in her esteem, for upon one occasion she had been a gratified witness to the promptitude with which he reproved Elizabeth for her obstinacy in insisting upon her own opinion when discussing household affairs with her mother. Laying his hand gently upon her shoulder, he kindly chided her, saying, "Would the young chicken be wiser than its mother, Elizabeth?" This rebuke was a gratifying revelation to Emilie. Elizabeth's husband was not then wholly blind to her faults; "it was to be hoped," she triumphantly said, "that he would continue to exert a salutary influence upon her wilful and perverse character."

In spite of this gratifying incident, Emilie still strenuously maintained that the future unhappiness of the young pair was a foregone conclusion; that the perfect unison that now appeared to exist between them could not last, for they were equally obstinate and impetuous. In the nature of things therefore she argued their love could not be permanent. "Life is not serious to them," she said, "they accept its responsibilities lightly." The young minister listened in pained silence to Emilie's pitiless criticisms. "We will see who is right, Wilhelm," she said, comprehending his studied silence. "I do not mean to be unkind," she added deprecatingly, as he still did not answer, "believe me when I say that I sympathize with their present

happiness; but I do maintain, with all due respect for your opinion, that I consider it a misfortune that Elizabeth has wedded one who will be but a broken reed to lean upon in time of trial; one who, from the very force of his character, will have power to draw so impressible a nature as hers farther and still farther day by day, step by step, from the spiritual life which is her greatest need. At the same time I consider this union a misfortune for him also," she continued, hoping to convince her mute and unsympathetic auditor. "Had Kadden chosen a superficial woman of the world, he would have been content in a round of social gaiety; and if life in the home circle did not prove agreeable and satisfactory, divertissements are ever at hand which would suffice. For my part I see nothing before them but utter wretchedness."

"Can you really mean that it would have been better for him to have married such a one as you describe?" asked the young man gravely, watching her face the while with keen but wistful intentness.

"Perhaps I should not have said that it would be better for him," said Emilie with heightened color, forcing herself to answer. "Life would only be to him as it is to hundreds of other men with like principles and views; they seek and find their happiness in worldly pleasures—they appear to glide along smoothly and satisfactorily to themselves, like the rest of their kind, having no higher aspirations than to have, as they say, a good time.

They are content with their surroundings and with themselves."

"Can you wish him to have a life so empty and aimless as that?"

"Elizabeth requires a quiet, sheltered life," she continued, "and that life she will not be permitted to lead. Their views can never accord. Herr Kadden is of a skeptical turn of mind, whereas Elizabeth has been religiously educated and indoctrinated from childhood into the tenets of our holy faith, and although she is of a wilful and perverse nature," "And sensitive and affectionate in a marked degree," interposed the young man, with the full voice of decision. "You misinterpret Kadden's character and Elizabeth's also. 'Transparent natures such as hers are often deceptive in their depth; those pebbles at the bottom of the stream are farther from us than we think.' Let us hope that your presentiments may prove wrong."

Elizabeth was attired in her beautiful white bridal dress upon the occasion of Emilie's wedding, and played the *rôle* of the happy wife to perfection; her light-hearted gayety was in the eyes of the strong-minded cousin only an additional evidence of her frivolity. She was chafing inwardly over an unfortunate remark of Aunt Wina's, who had been holding up her favorite for Emilie's imitation in her new sphere of wifhood. The bare suggestion was distasteful to her; emanating from such a source, made it the more disagreeable. She ex-

perienced some difficulty in controlling both her tongue and her temper. "The foolish old maid," she angrily reflected, "evidently intends keeping up her injudicious flatteries; the qualities with which she endows her favorite are in my judgment mythical at the best." Inexplicably strange was it to Emilie and to her coadjutor, Aunt Julchen, that Frau Kühneman was projecting a visit from her two sisters-in-law to Elizabeth at Braunhausen. Each in turn had strongly remonstrated with her mother upon the mistake she was making by so doing, but she had one unanswerable reply. "I am only carrying out the wishes of my husband, who wants his sisters to visit his daughter." It was under consideration also that the Geheimerath and his family should make a visit, and accompany the two aunts, after a fortnight's stay, from Woltheim back to Berlin.

Some few days after the wedding festivities were over, the delighted maiden aunts, with sundry trunks and cap-baskets, accompanied the young pair upon their return to Braunhausen. Elizabeth, instead of objecting to this visit, made merry over the prospect of exhibiting to their admiring gaze her skill in conducting the new establishment. Her husband quietly accepted the situation, and exerted himself to be agreeable to the ladies upon the journey. The gratified spinsters had found him charming hitherto; but seen in the light of helpful guide and prospective host, they sang a pæan of exaggerated praise, and congratulated

Elizabeth upon her good fortune in securing a matrimonial prize.

While Kadden was occupied at the little railway station in seeing to the luggage, the ladies entered the cool waiting-room. This opportunity was embraced to sound again their phenomenal nephew's praise. Aunt Wina, who loved immensely to hear herself talk, turned to her niece and counselled her to a proper appreciation of Herr von Kadden's admirable qualities.

"Life with such a husband as yours, Elizabeth, must be a heaven upon earth; it were impossible for maiden to dream of a more blissfully happy fate than has fallen to your lot. He is an ideal man, and if at any future time you come to me with one complaint about him, I tell you now that I will not listen to you, for you alone will be to blame."

"Wina, I agree with you to the letter," said acquiescent Paula, with effusion.

"Aunt," said Elizabeth, "you are as romantic and have as many fancies as any inexperienced girl; you idealize my husband into a perfect hero. Do you fancy that he is always as you have seen him when in company?"

Wina and Paula gazed at their niece in horrified surprise.

"You seem to think that Otto is ever in these charmingly complaisant moods from morning until night. You will be disappointed upon a nearer view; you will find him different from the ideal

man of your imagination. He is a man of affairs, and is subject to moods as well as his fellows." Elizabeth felt that her remarks were producing an impression, and that they were in the highest degree wise and reasonable.

The romantic spinsters saw their fairy castle shattered at one fell blow, and their hero suddenly transformed into an ordinary man, subject to all the weaknesses and foibles of his sex.

Wina, although still somewhat dazed, answered, "You speak very sensibly, dear Elizabeth. Your husband's time being occupied with his profession, as it should be, gives additional charm and dignity to his manhood."

"Yes," continued the young wife, "it would really be annoying to me if he had no profession. I have spoken as I have done to prepare you for what you will soon find out, that we do not lead the idyllic life that your fancy has painted."

The young officer now entered the room and informed the ladies that the carriage awaited them. Paula was still somewhat perplexed, but the case was clear to Wina. "Elizabeth," she reflected, "is of such a contradictory nature that she would contend that black was white." She concluded, however, that she would not disturb her serenity by thinking over it, but that she would exert a wholesome influence, during her stay, over her disputatious but charming niece.

It was not long before the ladies stood before the open window of their shaded, pleasant room,

which overlooked the garden. They had removed their caps to cool and refresh themselves after their hot dusty journey, and now indulged in subdued congratulatory remarks upon their good fortune as guests in this lovely pastoral abode.

"We will not decide at present upon the length of our stay," said shrewd Wina, with a significant look at her sister. "Should any one speak of our leaving at the close of the fortnight, all we have to do is to keep quiet and not commit ourselves. Things will no doubt adjust themselves satisfactorily. I am well aware that the grandparents and our sister-in-law were indisposed to favor our visit. To make the lives of lonely maiden ladies the happier does not come within the scope of their Christian duties. One needs to be somewhat thick-skinned, and to resent being thrust aside. Happen what may, however, we remain here six weeks at least."

"Do you really mean what you say?" asked Paula in surprise.

"Yes, I mean it. I know that Elizabeth is glad to have us with her. She is a good, grateful child; we can prolong our visit indefinitely."

"But her husband?" interposed Paula, nervously.

"Her husband will not be asked, my child," continued Wina, with a significant shrug of her shoulders. "Do not credit all that Elizabeth said about him. Could you not see that she did not believe it herself? I never met with a more courteous man: he defers to all her wishes; his own are subservient to hers."

Elizabeth's merry voice was heard, and the talk was broken off. Wina opened the door for her dear niece. A perfect torrent of congratulations greeted her entrance. The three ladies stood at the open window enjoying the cool tranquillity of the afternoon, when Kadden's angry voice was heard from the stable.

"He is rating his groom soundly," said Elizabeth, answering her aunts' questioning look.

"That is necessary at times; discipline must be maintained," said Aunt Wina, sententiously.

The Lieutenant now was to be seen leading his horse, while the groom followed closely. The beautiful brown animal limped badly, as his master walked him up and down the road, at the same time heaping a torrent of abuse upon the devoted head of the unfortunate groom, who deprecatingly excused himself from all blame in the matter.

"If the stupid fellow would only keep quiet," began Elizabeth, eagerly; "he knows that his master cannot bear to be answered."

"Why can't you call to him to hold his tongue?" said Paula, timidly.

Elizabeth shook her head.

"Your husband is certainly able to control his temper before it leads him too far," said Wina, with some anxiety.

"He can't do that," said Elizabeth, "this is why he has gotten the name of Hotspur."

"But, Elizabeth, reflect; a man of refinement, a *gentleman*, to let his temper get the better of him,"

continued Wina; "such an outburst of rage is frightful."

"Frightful!" echoed Paula, with a shudder.

The young wife was beginning herself to feel some apprehension as to the result. Kadden's voice was pitched so high that his words could hardly be distinguished. The groom meanwhile sought a place of refuge behind the horse. The young officer's blood was now fairly up, evidence to Elizabeth that the long disused custom of blows was likely to be resumed.

"My child, it is your *sacred* duty to go to your husband and bring him to reason," said Wina, authoritatively.

"No, no," said Paula, remonstrating, "he is in too great a rage; he would turn upon you."

"Nonsense; a gentleman would not treat his wife as he does his groom," said Wina. "Who will tell him the truth, if his wife does not?"

Elizabeth had left the room while her aunt was speaking and had hastened to the court-yard; but seeing that her husband was leading the horse to the stable, she re-entered the room, and in a few moments the angry officer made his appearance.

Elizabeth tried to control herself and keep quiet, but Aunt Wina's words, "It is your sacred duty to speak to your husband," came forcibly to her mind. In her excitement she said, in a tone of remonstrance, "Otto, how can you be so hasty?"

"That man is as dumb as a brute," he re-

turned curtly, dashing his cap angrily upon the table.

"I was frightened," continued Elizabeth, "I actually trembled as I listened to you; and as for my aunts, they were simply horrified."

"You are three simpletons," he interposed quickly; "men are all hasty."

"My father is not," said Elizabeth.

"Elizabeth, I will not listen to your comparisons. Your father is phlegmatic, I am not."

The young wife could not control herself, but thinking, "I have right on my side," began, "Aunt said that a gentleman—"

Von Kadden, provoked beyond endurance, seized his cap and interrupting her, said angrily, "Unless you would force me to leave the house and stay away as long as your two foolish aunts remain here, be silent."

She was silent. Her husband went to his own room, while Elizabeth reflected what was best to be done. She had fulfilled her duty according to Aunt Wina's advice, but with what result? Her principal care now was to conceal from her aunts all traces of agitation.

When the ladies made their appearance in the living room, Paula tremulously inquired, "How is it, Elizabeth?"

"Everything is satisfactory," said the young wife, loftily.

"Has your husband acknowledged his fault?" asked Aunt Wina, pointedly.

"Acknowledged his fault!" said Elizabeth, "A man is never in fault." Summarily dismissing the subject, she invited her aunts to go into the garden, while she ordered the maid to serve supper in the arbor.

"Wina," began Paula, excitedly, as soon as the sisters were alone, "I am really and truly afraid of this man."

"Poor Elizabeth! poor young wife!" said Wina, shaking her head ominously.

"Men are all barbarians," continued Paula.

"Yes, dear sister, we may give thanks that we never married, we would have been in our graves long before this if we had." "In the innocence of our hearts, we believed that this man was worthy of our respect and affection," added Paula, heaving a profound sigh. "In our ideal world we are naturally unable to comprehend the roughness of mankind, Paula," she continued in a low tone. "My first impression of this man was correct. I was not so far out of the way, and although in my good heartedness I reversed my opinion for a time, I am now fully disillusioned, and return to my first impression—he is a dangerous man."

"I must advise the poor child never to give him cause for anger. I dread to think of what might happen if she did," said Paula, with a shudder. "Let us leave this house, sister, as soon as possible."

"As soon as possible, yes," answered Wina. "Were it not for what might be said about it, I would go this minute."

After some further conversation, the two ladies, equipped with hat and work-bag, went out into the warm, sweet garden.

The evening was charming. A flood of mellow light from the setting sun poured through the tender green of blossoming rose trees, and gilded the tops of the distant firs upon the height beyond.

The garden was full of fragrance, and radiant in color. The table with its snowy damask, one of the old heir-loom's treasures, stood invitingly spread in the jessamine arbor. Elizabeth made a charming picture, clad in a fresh blue muslin dress, ready to dispense with hospitable care the wholesome and delicious dainties which the experienced Johanna, the pupil of the skillful Aunt Julchen, had prepared. The young wife concealed her depression under an assumption of gayety, yet the close observer could have detected a reserve which was not usual to her frank and truthful nature. She could not leave her aunts and go to her husband without exciting their suspicion. She therefore stood beneath the window of his room and called to him that supper was served.

The lieutenant returned in a few moments and conversed pleasantly with the ladies, greatly to their amazement. He gave them no opportunity to show their disapprobation of his conduct. Aunt Wina was indignant at the young man's insensibility, and longed to give expression to her outraged feelings.

The rôle Elizabeth was called upon to play was extremely distasteful to her. Her nature was too sincere to be other than her truthful self. She talked incessantly, jesting with her aunts, and even teasing her husband with her light banter, but *look* at him she could not. She was glad when the uncomfortable meal was over and her aunts withdrew to their own room, saying they thought it advisable, as the day had been fatiguing, to retire early. Herr von Kadden, also, pleading an accumulated correspondence, bade his wife and guests a courteous good night.

When Elizabeth had escorted the ladies to their apartment, she returned to the living room and stood for a few moments undecided what to do. Her first impulse was to go at once to her husband, but she reflected that it was evidently not his wish that she should do so, else why had he bidden her good night. Sighing, she went to her room and concluded to go to bed. She felt a dreary oppression at her heart. "It was cruel in him to speak to me as he did," she thought. At the remembrance hot tears rose to her eyes, the very ardor of her nature intensifying her sense of desolation. For long she lay in troubled thought, then sobbed herself to sleep like a sorrowful child.

The next morning brought a gleam of returning cheerfulness. Elizabeth had scarcely completed her toilet when her aunts made their appearance, saying the morning was so charming that they had risen early to enjoy it. Her husband, who had

ridden forth some time before to attend to his usual military duties, had not yet returned. Breakfast was over and still he did not come. Elizabeth, not wishing to disappoint her aunts, who had been calculating upon the pleasure, set out with them for a series of visits. The ladies were radiant in their gratification, for they longed with all the strength of their shallow natures to see and to be seen, to amuse and to be amused. Her husband had laughingly told Elizabeth that it would be best to let them alone, as they would thus be in a measure relieved from the tedium of furnishing entertainment for them. The visits proved more than satisfactory, and they returned home in high good humor, assuring their niece that she was to be congratulated upon the charming society in Braunhausen.

Upon the following day, Frau von Bonsak gave a *fête champêtre*. To this party followed another and still another. The young officer was courteous to his guests. The fortnight passed in uninterrupted gayety, and Wina again informed her sister that she had determined to postpone their departure indefinitely. She was having a good time, and could see no reason why she should leave the gayeties of delightful, suburban Braunhausen to stifle in the heat and dust of mid summer in the city of Berlin. "If Elizabeth's *husband* is not all that could be desired, our dear niece has," she continued, "charming society about her. Besides, Kadden is a man of the world, well thought of by

his Colonel and by all of his comrades; he is fond of society, and withal a remarkably distinguished looking man and a brave soldier. Elizabeth might have done worse," she added, complacently, "indeed, he may be considered a matrimonial prize. Men are all alike: they are not made to order."

"But think, sister, what a husband Herr von Stottenheim would have made our Elizabeth," said the romantic Paula.

"Yes, he is certainly all that is admirable," said Wina. "I have informed him confidentially of the poor young wife's trials, and urged him to influence Von Kadden to mingle more in society on Elizabeth's account. Considering all things, I have come to the conclusion to remain. Our brother and his wife can stay at Woltheim. The original plan must at all odds be changed."

"But Elise would naturally prefer to be with her daughter," mildly objected Paula.

"*She* would, and so would we," rejoined Wina, sharply. "We are in possession; that is nine points of the law. I do not calculate upon giving up such an advantage. There is no use in having too thin a skin, Paula. I hold to my first position; it is customary to impose upon maiden ladies, and I for one do not intend to let myself be thrust into a corner. I shall act on the defensive."

Upon the evening before the Geheimerath and his family were expected, Wina coolly informed her niece of her decision. "We are here," she said, "and we know not if we will ever be here

again. On the contrary, your mother will visit you frequently. She will of course give up her visit for our accommodation; and indeed it will matter but little whether she lodges here or at Woltheim, we will be constantly together."

"But father wishes to stay with us," said Elizabeth, in some embarrassment.

"Your father is considerate to his sisters. We will not be turned out at *his* instigation."

Elizabeth had nothing further to say. She was too much confounded by the cool announcement to take exception to it. After bidding her aunts good night, she repaired to her husband's room and communicated to him this new perplexity. At first he was angry, but seeing Elizabeth's annoyance, he controlled himself. "Never mind, Leischen," he said, "you see if I am not master in my own house. I will get rid of the spinsters for you without fail."

"But only think what a vexation it will be if you do! What will Aunt Wina say?"

"Have no fears. I will be exceedingly polite. I will resort to diplomacy, and send them off with my colors flying."

Elizabeth, laughing, shook her head.

"You think I can't? Well, I assure you that I shall change my tactics if they stay any longer. I have been the attentive host only because I hoped for their speedy departure—a most remarkable want of foresight on my part. Remain any longer they cannot; we have hospitably fulfilled

the duties that kinship requires. Have I made my case clear?" he said with a smile. "For them to prolong their stay indefinitely, as they propose to do, is an imposition. To-morrow morning you had better tell them that we are looking forward with great pleasure to the visit of your parents, and that our arrangements must remain as was at first determined upon."

Elizabeth recognized the propriety of this course and silently acquiesced. "Surely," she reflected, "I know my aunts so well that I should feel no hesitation in speaking frankly with them about it." With some inward trepidation, however, the young wife sought her pillow, but did not find the rest she desired.

The following morning was charming. Elizabeth had ordered breakfast served in the jessamine arbor. Wina and Paula gazed in genuine delight upon the beauties of nature. The delicious cup of fragrant Mocha also had its reviving influence upon their sense of enjoyment. Like a culprit their niece sat opposite them, and with burning cheeks informed them that she hoped to welcome her father and mother that afternoon, and as she had but one guest-chamber, she was obliged to ask them to vacate it. Aunt Wina listened with flashing eyes as Elizabeth discharged this heavy commission. Her mortification at first exceeded all bounds. "To *you*, my child," she said cuttingly, "I make no reproach. *You* have acted only as your lord and master has dictated, and you have

done right, although I have *some* claim upon your love and gratitude. You should have spared your old aunts this mortification." And now there followed a *résumé* of the past.

Elizabeth listened silently, giving not much heed to the lecture, but evidently feeling its tediousness. She was glad when the uncomfortable meal came to an end. The ladies excused themselves with considerable formality, and at once retired to their room to pack, as the coming guests were expected to arrive at noon. When alone with her sister, Wina indulged in violent reproaches against their host, at whose instigation she knew Elizabeth had spoken to them. Never again would she cross the threshold of this house, where brutality and tyranny reigned supreme. Timorous Paula begged only for a speedy and quiet departure.

After remaining as long as possible in their apartment, the aunts descended to the living-room. The time passed away serenely until Herr von Kadden made his appearance. It was an intolerably hot day. Throwing himself into a corner of the sofa, he pressed his hand upon his forehead—an invariable sign that he was suffering from headache. It required great self-control to enable him to occupy the same room with Elizabeth's two disagreeable old aunts. His wife could see that he was chafing with angry impatience. Tremblingly she looked forward to a violent scene, should anything go amiss, for her nerves had been strained to

the utmost. At this moment Lieutenant von Stottenheim was announced. He had just heard, he said, of the sudden resolution of the ladies, and called to pay his respects. Wina was profuse in her expressions of appreciation of his courtesy, and administered some stinging side-blows upon the two delinquents seated upon the sofa.

After a short interval Stottenheim turned to his friend, saying jokingly, "You are in a bad humor to-day."

"I have a headache," was the short answer.

"Tell the truth, Kadden, you have been quarreling with that stupid groom of yours," he continued innocently. Then turning to the ladies, he spoke deprecatingly of a soldier's hard life—compelled to come in contact with rough and ignorant men.

"More honor to the man who passes through such an ordeal unscathed," responded Wina, with a significant bow to the speaker.

Herr von Stottenheim acknowledged the compliment, but said good-naturedly, "I would not wish all my words to pass in review before you fair ladies. It is easy to fall a victim to fits of anger."

"Did Wilhelm understand your command to-day," inquired the Lieutenant, turning laughingly to von Kadden, "when you addressed him with that impressive title?"

"You surely did not indulge in abusive language," exclaimed his wife unthinkingly.

There was an expression the reverse of angelic

to be seen upon the face of the young officer, but he was silent.

"It is frightful," began Elizabeth excitedly.

The young husband laid his finger upon her lips and said gravely, "Be quiet, Elizabeth; you do not know what you are saying."

A painful flush mantled her cheek, mounting even to her brow. She bent silently over her embroidery. Aunt Wina's sharp black eyes darted arrows of wrath upon the barbarian. The Lieutenant said with a laugh, "You are an ungallant man, Kadden," then skillfully diverted the conversation into another and less dangerous channel. Elizabeth, filled with indignation, left the room, ostensibly to attend to some household duty.

Scarcely had his wife quitted the apartment, when her husband also made a speedy exit. Wina, who was bursting with wrath, could no longer control her tongue, but unburdened herself to her dear, wise friend Stottenheim. "Poor young wife!" she sighed. "Did you see how she struggled with her tears? And he—he," she said with withering scorn, "has gone to his horse."

Stottenheim defended his comrade warmly. "This is only a passing cloud, my dear ladies; I beg of you, do not speak of these trifles to persons who might misunderstand them, and thus make trouble between the young pair."

Unfortunately Herr von Kadden came back only too soon. Wina would have liked to prattle away

still longer to her dear friend, whom she had constituted Elizabeth's guardian angel, but the conversation came to an abrupt end.

The expected guests arrived, and in the excitement caused by their coming all other interests were for the time forgotten.

The wagon was unloaded of their luggage, and the trunks of the maiden ladies placed thereon. Elizabeth prevailed upon her mother to permit the children to remain and spend the day at Braunhausen. The three eldest were to stay at Woltheim. The town children were delighted with the free country life. They romped in the garden, drank coffee after dinner in the jessamine arbor, and wandered through the hedge to the green meadow beyond, where they plucked the lovely flowers to their heart's content.

The week passed all too quickly. Intercourse with old Woltheim was all the entertainment that *these* dear guests desired. The Geheimerath was duly informed of his sisters' experience during their sojourn with the young couple, but he dismissed the subject with an injunction not to intermeddle in the affairs of his daughter and her husband.

Upon their return to Berlin, the aunts resolved that they would stop at Wandstadt and pay Emilie a call.

It was a beautiful day, and their old ally gave them a warm welcome. Her first question was, "You have been spending some time with Elizabeth?"

Wina's answer was brief, as they were not alone, but she shrugged her shoulders significantly, and deprecatingly cast her eyes heavenward.

The temptation was too great for Emilie. She promptly determined that Wina should tell her the story in the presence of her husband.

"Were you not pleased with your visit to Braunhausen?" she inquired. Wina drew a deep breath, again shrugged her shoulders, and described with angry heat her experiences in the young household, the rudeness and the ill temper of the husband, the hidden tears and secret grief of the young wife.

"But surely Elizabeth also must be to blame," said Emilie.

"You know Elizabeth's faults," continued Wina, heaving a profound sigh. "I advised her to be more submissive, but all in vain. To her husband's impetuous nature, her disposition is as tinder to fire."

Emilie was sufficiently discreet in her intercourse with her excited and garrulous guests, not to commit herself as she listened to the exaggerated details.

As soon as she was alone with her husband, she remarked triumphantly that her prediction had been verified, although much sooner than she had expected. Pastor Schlosser had but little to say. He could not contradict the statements of the ladies, as he had had but little intercourse with Elizabeth and her husband since his marriage.

From this time innumerable were the head-shakings and the whisperings which circulated from ear to ear throughout the family connection, regarding the young husband and wife at Braunhausen. "Public opinion in these cases is always of the feminine gender—not the world, but the world's wife."

CHAPTER XIX.

It was a still, grey November day; the sun shone faintly at intervals through the light, low-hanging clouds: the old coach drawn by the sober greys drove slowly into Braunhausen, and stopped at Herr von Kadden's door. The young wife stepped lightly down the steps to welcome the beloved guest. The weather had been inclement, and as Elizabeth had been prevented from going to Woltheim, Frau Budmar determined to drive to Braunhausen. Ever since the whisperings and insinuations had been circulated in the family connection, the old lady had never met her grand-daughter without some solicitude; but when she saw the bright glow upon her cheek and her eyes sparkling with manifest joy at her unexpected visit, she felt convinced that there was little truth in the rumours afloat about the unhappiness of the young couple. Elizabeth was the more delighted as her husband had made an engagement to dine with some brother officers, so that she would have been alone until evening.

After dinner, as they sipped their coffee, Elizabeth hesitatingly but frankly began, "Grand-mamma, you knew that Otto and I had joined the club?"

"Yes, and I am sorry to say that I think you

have made a mistake in doing so. I hoped that you would have selected a different circle," said her Grandmother, quietly.

"But we *had* to do it," said Elizabeth, "my husband would otherwise have made not only an enemy of the Colonel, but of the rest of the officers. We have had unmistakable proof that his conduct has been already closely and unfavorably commented upon."

"But he has done nothing wrong," said Frau Budmar.

"Our manner of life is looked upon as wrong," continued the young wife, hastily; "what would be the result if we withdrew entirely from intercourse with them? It would assuredly make it unpleasant and uncomfortable for us both. My husband by so doing would be subjected to many disagreeable annoyances. But Grandmamma," she added, reassuringly, "there is really no danger; we mingle with them only on account of my husband's position."

"Do you recollect your impressions upon the occasion of your first visit to Colonel von Bonsak's, Elizabeth?" asked her Grandmother, pointedly.

"My impressions have undergone no change whatever," said the young wife; "but my surroundings, my duties and my responsibilities have changed. I have since then acquired more courage and greater confidence, and can mingle with them with more freedom than I could then. I hope to be able to exercise an influence for good among them."

"You deceive yourself, my dear child," returned the Grandmother gently. "Pray God that *you* suffer no harm therefrom." With these words, wise Frau Budmar dismissed the subject. She wished to say nothing that would tend to destroy the peculiar love and confidence that now existed between her grand-daughter and herself. Persistent opposition to her husband's views might erect a barrier that would be difficult to overcome. Accordingly the dear old lady, to Elizabeth's delight and entertainment, indulged, with an animation peculiarly her own, in a retrospect of her house-keeping experiences in Braunhausen almost fifty long years ago.

Upon the evening of that same day the club met at Colonel von Bonsak's. Elizabeth upon her entrance into the brilliantly lighted room thought of the words so gravely uttered by her grandmother, "Pray God, my dear child, that you suffer no harm." She was a general favorite and was welcomed with manifest pleasure; but Fräulein Amalie Keller, with the clear, wise blue eyes, was undisputedly the center of attraction with the members of the club. It was she who so skillfully arranged the many and varied tableaux, who chose so sensibly and manipulated so ingeniously the German and French comedies gotten up for the society's entertainment. But the direct aim and object of all her indefatigable efforts was as yet unattained, and at each season's close she was Fräulein Amalie Keller still, with the vexatious

necessity of additional prospective work, for "promotions have ever to be taken with bitter herbs." Adolfine, on the contrary, was radiant over her late new conquest, and it seemed as though her inconstant heart had settled upon the handsome, but far from unexceptionable, young barrister, Maier. Her parents and sisters did not appear to be as well satisfied with her admirer as she was herself.

"We will play a social game this evening," said Adolfine. "Dear Frau Bandow, will you not take charge of it?" she asked, turning to a lady who sat near, "which will insure us a spirited game."

The person thus addressed answered only with a smile. The young girl however seemed to be well satisfied: they understood each other perfectly. Frau Bandow was not a person of social importance; on the contrary she was a light-minded, ordinary woman, a bad guide for the young ladies of the garrison. Upon several occasions she had exercised her influence prejudicially to the future prospects of her admiring satellites. In her dead, empty heart there was no love for her husband, and she devoted her aimless life not only to indulging in secret intrigues of her own, but diverted herself by playing the *confidante* in many a clandestine affair of the heart, greatly to the annoyance and mortification of the parents of her victims.

She it was who now arranged the seats at the round table, and apparently with the most innocent intention in the world placed Referendär Maier in

the vacant seat at Adolfine's side. The rest of the ladies she troubled herself about but little, permitting them to arrange themselves as they pleased about the table. Kadden was engaged in an animated musical discussion with an elderly counsellor, who, by the way, was also a scientific and impassioned performer; accordingly he excused himself from taking part in the game.

Elizabeth, who felt peculiarly alone this evening, and under restraint in the uncongenial company, at intervals looked longingly at her husband. Instinctively he divined her mood, and although apparently absorbed in listening to his companion, drew nearer to his wife.

The game was now fairly started. Blank papers were distributed upon which each one of the circle was required to write the final words of one or more rhyming couplets: the papers were then shuffled and again distributed to be completed. To the ever ready Stottenheim was accorded the reading aloud of the verses.

At the conclusion of the reading of the first four lines, which sentimentally referred to the vanished joys of youth, Frau Badow exclaimed maliciously, "Fräulein Keller!" for the frivolous woman was well aware that she was no favorite of that young lady.

"No, Stottenheim may be accredited with that composition," said one of the gentlemen, "such elegies are in his line."

"The guesses must be pursued no further," said

the master of ceremonies, "it is not in good form."

The next rhyme submitted to the circle was upon the pleasures of society.

"Adolfine!" all exclaimed in chorus.

"I call that a spirited sentiment," cried Frau Bandow with a light laugh. Adolfine, with sparkling coquetry of manner, looked proudly around the table.

The Lieutenant now read a few lines of an Epicurean character.

"Frau von Bandow's admirable conception of life and its responsibilities!" remarked her rival coldly.

"It is certainly the best view one can take of life under the circumstances," said the young barrister, with a smile.

"It *would* be, were not the close of life so serious a question," said one of the other gentlemen, gravely. Some of the guests agreed with the latter speaker, the rest declared themselves upon the side of Frau Bandow.

Kadden, in spite of his engrossment, heard all that was said by the party at the round table, and involuntarily drew still nearer to Elizabeth. A sense of blame pressed upon him, that he had led his innocent young wife into the midst of this frivolous company.

Stottenheim now read a couplet which took so serious a view of life and its responsibilities that a constrained silence followed the reading. Adolfine instinctively drew away from her admirer; even the

irrepressible Frau Bandow winced under it, and although she meditated a mocking speech, prudently abstained from its utterance.

"Who of our members can this preacher be?" asked Herr von Bandow, with a smile.

"By the by, this sentiment is the best by far that has been written," said Stottenheim, with emphasis.

The ladies, with the exception of Adolfine and Frau Bandow, unhesitatingly agreed with the Lieutenant. An animated discussion whether one should take life gravely or lightly ensued. Soon the Babel of tongues was indescribable. One contended that morality and a good conscience was the synonym of happiness, another called virtue and philanthropy the higher good: with one an earnest mind was the most desirable; another on the contrary, said that the light mind was preferable for life's needs. Frau Bandow, who had remarkable facility of expression, would not permit her views to suffer defeat for want of speech, and boldly and unhesitatingly asserted that she considered it the highest type of philosophy to make the very most of the chances that life offered. "Of course, without doing anything blame-worthy," she added, with a conscious smile. "You, my dear Madame," she said, suddenly turning with *empressement* to Elizabeth, "will one day find yourself unpleasantly awakened, should you persist in entertaining such gloomy, one-sided views of life. You will have your husband upon your conscience:

he is a different man from what he formerly was, I assure you."

"He pleases me as he is," said Elizabeth, coldly.

"That will take care of itself," returned Frau Bandow, provokingly; "he will tire of you, and you in turn will tire of him. You have youth and beauty," she said, flatteringly; "you should make the most of them while they last."

"That might not please my husband," said Elizabeth.

"All the better; he will then be jealous," returned the light-minded woman, with a laugh. "There is nothing more entertaining, you will find, than a jealous husband."

"That plan would not work with Kadden," laughed his friend Stottenheim, with a significant shrug of his shoulders, casting a glance at the grave, fastidious young officer.

"Good! He could then challenge his wife. That would be an intensely interesting duel," said Adolfine, pertly.

"No," said Frau Bandow, "there is a better way out of it than that; he in his turn must make his wife jealous."

"Why must husband and wife mutually vex and annoy each other?" said Elizabeth, with some show of courage.

"A woman's reason, because—because it is always so," continued Frau Bandow. "It is a very disagreeable discovery for the doting spouse, when the *Herr Gemahl* takes more pleasure in dancing

turn to entertain the club, she invited her grandparents as her guests for the evening, according to the privilege granted the members. It was strange to Elizabeth to see their dear faces among this mixed company. The worthy pair, however, were equal to the occasion, none being more at their ease, brighter or more entertaining than they, excepting Elizabeth herself, who to Frau Badow's surprise, was a most agreeable hostess, full of vivacity and innocent gayety. The presence of the venerable pair acted only as a check to the levity, not to the cheerfulness of the company. There was a marked contrast between Elizabeth's elastic bearing, bright spirits and animated countenance and the constraint evinced by Adolfine and her companion. Their monosyllabic and embarrassed replies to the lovely old lady, who courteously tried to engage them in conversation, placed them for once at a disadvantage.

Out of respect to Herr Budinar and his good wife, cards were dispensed with, and the entertainment for the evening was confined to conversation and music. The hours, however, did not drag; on the contrary, they glided pleasantly away, and the irrepressible Stottenheim could not resist whispering now and then to this one and to that, "A charming old couple. It is strange, but nevertheless true," he would add, "notwithstanding the rigidity of their religious views, they are always agreeable and entertaining, and so genuinely happy that one could desire nothing better than to grow old as

gracefully as they." And when Frau Bandow would whisper in his usually ready ear a witty speech regarding them, he placed himself at once upon the defensive, saying as he drew away from her in disgust, "No, I pray you, gracious lady, desist. I must beg of you to cease jesting upon that subject. I grant you that their belief is incomprehensible to me, but they are earnest in their convictions, and their lives are a sufficient guarantee of the genuineness of their faith. It were well if some of us could imitate the beauty of their character," he added, with marked emphasis.

"Life is no idle dream, but a solemn reality based upon eternity and encompassed by eternity. Find out your task; stand to it; the night cometh when no man can work."

CHAPTER XX.

ELIZABETH and her husband spent the Christmas holidays at Woltheim. The months of January and February glided uneventfully away, the young wife leading, meanwhile, a more quiet and secluded life than hitherto ; and, when the March sun shone warm and bright through the room, it was to her as though a marvel had been wrought, for a "lovely little soul of God's giving" lay beside her in his cradle. Elizabeth listened almost reverentially to the gentle respiration, and to the light movement beneath the soft covering. With unutterable content and grateful heart, the young mother thanked the dear God for this gift. The world grew bright again. Elizabeth's ardent soul longed for companionship, and now she had "one dear being on whom she could lavish her heart's best affections;" she longed for an object that would be dear to her, and to whom her love would be a necessity also.

Kadden was happy in witnessing his wife's happiness. The summer months passed away for the young mother in undisturbed joy. If during this time her husband was ever irritable or abstracted, she had her dear little son, to whom her love and care was an absolute necessity. Elizabeth arrived, by some unwise and subtle course of reasoning, at the conclusion that it was not worth her

while to enter upon any explanation with her husband upon occasions of their slight differences, for when his angry moods had passed he was as loving and kindly as ever. The rumors that had been rife in the family connection gradually subsided, as Frau Kühneman, herself fully satisfied regarding the mutual affection and happiness of the young couple with whom she had sojourned for a time, now embraced every opportunity of giving her experience and views on the subject.

Autumn had come, and Elizabeth was more blooming than ever; her face was radiant with happiness. She felt more self-confident than ever, and fancied she was able to meet all the requirements and responsibilities that society demanded of her. Her ardent disposition longed for constant activity. She would not confess it to herself, but husband and child were not enough for her. Her world seemed too narrow, and she looked about for some outlet for the exuberance of life that animated her. Amongst other objects that presented themselves, was the religious society in Braunhausen. Intercourse with such persons as these, she thought, would be more agreeable and improving than the rapid, tiresome set whom one ever met at Colonel Von Bonsak's. She accordingly broached the subject to her husband, and became quite enthusiastic over the idea of inaugurating a new society, with interests and pleasures opposed to the club of which they were at present members.

Herr Kadden listened quietly to the presentation

of her plans, but answered gravely, "I might as well leave Braunhausen, Elizabeth; my position will not permit it. I would subject myself to disagreeable imputations and embarrassing complications. For a soldier to act thus would be virtually a defiance of his superior officers. No, this plan is not to be thought of."

Elizabeth recognized the correctness of his reasoning, and her sense of duty toward her husband silenced her. She comforted herself with the thought that the society would be different, and therefore more agreeable, this winter than it was during the last. Frau Bandow was no longer a member of the club. She had taken so prominent and withal so compromising a part in Adolfin's love affair, as to bring not only the principals, but herself, into undesirable prominence. Kadden from a sense of duty communicated the facts to the Colonel. This naturally produced an open rupture with the scheming Frau. Elizabeth had been so accustomed to hearing in her father's house of 'mingling in society from prudential motives,' that she was the more ready to adopt her husband's views. The young pair having thus silenced objection, met as regularly this season as they had done last winter with the club.

CHAPTER XXI.

AUTUMN and winter had passed, and in the monotonous round of daily trivialities and duties, life glided imperceptibly and quickly away. In spite of all their good resolutions, the young pair in Braunhausen found themselves, from day to day, more and more firmly bound to the world and its pleasures. In the early autumn they had resolved to begin a new life. Unfortunately for their good resolutions, they mingled with those who viewed life from a different stand-point. To one as enthusiastic, earnest and sensitive as Elizabeth, the aimless, frivolous life she was leading seemed to her spiritual preception "chill, colorless and narrow." In order to hide her feelings from those around her, she forced herself to play a *rôle* at variance with her candid and child-like nature. The nervous fatigue of this existence, and the flippant, artificial vivacity which she assumed, reacted unfavorably upon her disposition, and the young wife frequently indulged in teasing, bantering remarks when alone with her husband, but, when he in turn adopted a similar tone of badinage, she was deeply pained. The knowledge that she was to blame made her only the more miserable. She felt that she was living to no purpose; she was weary of her assumed spirits, and her conscience

shrank from a too close investigation into the life she was leading—she scorned its aimlessness, yet was too weak to resist.

Elizabeth had at first tried to lead a double life, —to keep up not only her intercourse with the gay society in Braunhausen, but to cultivate the friendship of the religious portion of the community, which embraced a number of earnest, cultivated people, whom her grandparents desired she should know. Little by little this intimacy had declined; it was humiliating to Elizabeth that the desirable intercourse was now restricted to a formal recognition. She shrank from acknowledging her mortification to her husband, and strove to conceal even from herself how sensitive she was to the fact. Herr von Kadden felt the loss of the friendship of these Christian people, but was at the same time too sensible and clear-sighted a man not to be aware that the double intercourse could not be kept up; that one or the other must necessarily be relinquished.

Morning after morning following the balls and gay parties which Elizabeth attended, she would lie for hours upon her bed, worn out and nervous. The voice of conscience at such times spoke loudly and persistently in the husband's ear. "Are you a proper guide for so impressionable a nature? Is the circle into which you have led her a help to her inner life, or is it a poisonous breath which will in time destroy her lovely, child-like nature? Has not an indefinable change already taken place

in the artless girl whom you met only two short years ago?" Such questions often presented themselves, weighing upon his spirits and disturbing his faith in many of his former opinions. "I would protect and guard her as the apple of my eye," he thought; but the power of habit was too strong, and good resolves were set aside.

There had been comparatively but little intercourse with Woltheim during the past winter. Herr Budmar had been sick; absolute quiet and rest had been prescribed. Charlotte also had not been well; her malady had latterly assumed a nervous character, and her recovery had been for some time doubtful.

One morning in the latter part of February the old coach and sober greys drew up before the door of the little house in Braunhausen. Elizabeth was delighted, and ran out hurriedly, expecting to greet her grandmother. The old groom lost no time in delivering his sad message, that the young couple should come without delay to Woltheim, as Charlotte lay at the point of death and had expressed a wish to see them.

Elizabeth hastily threw aside, with positive disgust and horror, the dress that she had been decorating for that evening's entertainment. Instead of diverting themselves with cards and dancing, they would soon be by a bed of death. Silently she sat by her husband's side in the carriage, both of them depressed by the anticipation of what they would soon witness; neither of them had ever seen

any one die. The religion which answers only while health and happiness remain, they felt would not suffice for a death-bed.

Upon their arrival, Frau Budmar led them immediately to Charlotte's room. She lay still and peaceful; "a shadow of the coming repose fell gently over her." With firm and childlike faith she saw heaven open, and awaited in loving confidence a speedy and quiet departure, knowing that the Lord himself would gently lead her through the valley of the shadow of death. She feebly extended her delicate, wasted hand as they approached the bed, and joining their hands, she pressed them and whispered a last but hopeful *wiedersehen*.

She had already taken leave of the rest of the family. Humbly and gratefully she had thanked them for their loving, tender care. Herr Budmar now read by the bedside a solemn hymn, while Uncle Charles buried his grief-stricken face in the coverlet. The physician announced the near approach of death. The "awful silence of the coming change fell upon them;" there was at first a slight irregularity in the respiration; gradually the convulsive gasps came shorter and still shorter, and soon she quietly breathed her last.

All had gathered about her bed; it was a "pathetic, blessed picture of repose." An irresistible desire for the same sweet rest took possession of the by-standers, and a homesick longing for the dear, dear country, whither her freed spirit had taken its flight.

Elizabeth was completely unnerved ; her husband also was strangely affected. Again the Spirit of God gently strove with him, and an unutterable longing for the faith that made such a death possible took possession of him.

Frau Budmar lovingly folded the wasted hands, and said, softly, "We would not call her back ; 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord,'" and her husband said, solemnly, "May God in his mercy grant to each one of us as gracious a deliverance from this world, and as peaceful an entrance into the world above."

And now they all left the chamber of death, and Elizabeth and her husband soon after drove silently back to Braunhausen.

The following morning Elizabeth lay upon her bed, weeping bitterly until she sank into the deep sleep of exhaustion. She awoke as her husband entered. Seating himself sympathizingly by her side, he sought to soothe her.

"Tell me, Elizabeth, why you are so troubled," he asked. "It cannot be because of Charlotte's death?" She shook her head. "You never saw any one die before," he continued; "but her death was so tranquil, so beautiful, you should not grieve."

She only wept the more, and sobbed out, "I can never die so calmly as she. My heart is so desolate, so empty ! An intolerable weight oppresses me; I actually tremble from fear."

Vainly he tried to comfort her, telling her that

she was not only unnerved by witnessing the death of Charlotte, but by the fatigue consequent upon the restless life she had been leading.

She half raised herself and said excitedly, "Otto, I had a dream in the night. I know that it was only a dream, but yet it torments me. I stood upon a high rock, and around and about and beneath me was a dark, unfathomable sea of gray fog. I heard a voice saying 'Leap down; this is Eternity.' I awoke with a start: a great horror fell upon me. During that short dream I experienced the sensations and emotions of a lifetime. It is impossible for me to describe the terror that overwhelmed me. My years seemed to have been passed in a purposeless dream, my future was without comfort and beyond hope of change. 'Leap down,' said the voice. I *saw* Eternity before me. 'Your doom is irrevocably fixed; what was visionary is now a reality; the step from life to death is before you.' "

"You should be glad it was only a dream," said her husband soothingly.

"But, Otto," she cried vehemently, "that moment will, *must* come, and I will be as frightened and as wretched as I am now."

He had thrown his arm protectingly around her, but sat with downcast eyes. He knew not what to say. What comfort would it be to speak to his young wife of a good conscience, of uprightness, of morality! No, that heaven of his had been long shattered. In the presence of the fearful mystery

of death the last prop had given way. "As the truth became apparent to him, the false supports upon which he had hitherto leaned slipped from beneath him." For a long time he sat in deep and gloomy thought, comprehending only too well his wife's emotion; each tear fell upon his conscience as a drop of molten lead. Was he not guilty of her mental agony? had he not led her into this miserable condition? These thoughts weighed heavily upon his heart and disturbed his faith in his former opinions.

"Otto," she cried, breaking the silence and gazing appealingly into his face, her beautiful eyes suffused with tears, which only intensified their radiance, "can you not comfort me?"

"I comfort you?" he repeated. "I cannot comfort you; you must turn," he added in a low voice, "to the source from which you formerly obtained help and comfort."

She shook her head despondently.

"Elizabeth, speak!"

"I *will* speak," she said, with an effort. "I *must* unburden my heart."

There was a strange pathos in her vibrating voice as she told of the many and good resolutions of her early married life; her desire to do right, her struggles, her religious deterioration, her ever-increasing worldliness, her faithlessness to God, her Saviour. "But, Otto," she said, laying her hand tenderly upon his forehead, "I cannot bear to see you sad. I love you so that I would like to bear your unhappiness as well as my own."

He covered his eyes with his hands, saying with tremulous voice and quivering lip, "Your love cannot comfort me, nor can my love help you; we cannot lean upon the earthly."

As her fears were thus confirmed, Elizabeth's despondency increased greatly. That the love upon which she had so securely leaned for help and happiness could fail her in time of need, was indeed a shock.

After her husband left the room she hastened to her chamber, and when she had closed the door, yielding to the impulse of self-condemnation aroused within her, she kneeled down, and, bowing her head in her hands, poured out her penitence with bitter self-reproach. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do," was now her earnest cry.

For a long time she remained upon her knees. "Peace and hope began to spring anew in her repentant heart, timidly and feebly, but still germs of promise, containing within themselves the earnest of a richer and a more abiding strength."

CHAPTER XXII.

ONE more year has passed. It is a charming spring day; Elizabeth is standing by the nursery window gazing meditatively up into the clear blue depths of the sky, then down upon the court-yard, where little Frederick is frolicking in the soft, balmy air, and the nurse is carrying, up and down in the bright, warm sunshine, an infant daughter, whom the dear God sent to her in November. Has the Lord wrought a miracle in her as she had fondly hoped? Is she happier than when she prayed "through happiness or through unhappiness, make me again thy child?" No, she is farther from it than ever. "The punishment seems to have fallen upon me alone," she plaintively murmured. The world and its pleasures had wearied her and estranged her from her God; she had gradually neglected prayer, and had found that society was but a poor comforter when the body was sick and the soul out of tune, and now that she had turned away from the world with a feeling akin to disgust, she found that the Lord was as far off from her as ever.

She had been sick the entire year, sick in body and in mind. Soon after Charlotte's death, in the spring of 1848, the Revolution was inaugurated, which made an epoch in the history of Prussia.

The country was plunged into the greatest excitement. Nothing was talked of, nothing was thought of, but grave political affairs. Elizabeth, whom sickness and nervousness had rendered irritable, was not only indifferent to the present crisis, but turned from its discussion with a feeling of weariness and disgust. "It did not stir her nature, for all her ardor was concentrated in her affections;" she accordingly was unresponsive when her husband narrated to her the things that were said and done in the world he frequented. To him the momentous event was of all engrossing interest. His mind was so preoccupied that he had scarcely a word or a look of sympathy for his wife. He had no time to devote to Elizabeth's variable moods. In the beginning of the excitement she had emphatically assured him that she not only took no interest in politics, but that she could not endure to hear them discussed in her presence. Accordingly he had turned to the society of his comrades, who took an equal interest with himself in this crisis. What was to the young officer a time of stimulus, was to his wife, on the contrary, a season of the deepest depression. To bear Elizabeth's moods with patience was an impossibility to one of his impetuous nature. He had upon one occasion ventured to complain to Frau Budmar, and the kind woman tried to comfort him by assuring him that this period of ill health would pass away, and his wife would be as bright and as happy as she was before. But he

had never cultivated "the graces of patience and forbearance or the sweet spirit of kindness," and frequently suffered his impatience and anger to overcome the love which he still bore his wife. If at any time he constrained himself to sympathy, Elizabeth was keenly conscious of the effort it cost him, and with a sad sense that he had no genuine love for her, felt only doubly aggrieved.

During the month of November, when the political agitation had reached its zenith, her little daughter was born. She hoped for a return of her former health, but there ensued no change—it seemed hopelessly shattered; fever returned, and when the little Marie was baptized, the young mother was scarcely able to hold the babe during the service. Upon that day, in a confidential hour, she unburdened her heart to her grandmother, and was comforted by her assurance that when the existing political agitation would subside, her husband would gladly return to the peace and quiet of his home life; that she herself had a similar experience during the war of 1806. Elizabeth felt that she had little cause to be hopeful, and mourned over the cloud that had fallen upon her life.

As she stood by the window, her husband rode into the court-yard. She felt the warm blood mount to her pale cheeks: the more she doubted his affection, the more persistently she treasured his lost love.

He appeared to be unusually abstracted; he did not even notice his little son, who clamored the

louder to attract his attention. *He* would not suffer himself to be slighted, and gave his father no peace until he seated him upon the horse and let him ride to the stable. The young officer did not look up at the window where his wife was standing. Memory brought back to her the numberless times in their early married life when the strains of martial music had reached her ear from the distance, and with confidence she had hastened to receive the coveted greeting. When her husband first omitted to look up to where she stood so eagerly expectant, her pride was roused and she shrank from mentioning it to him: *that* belonged to the lost joys. The hope that the Lord would reanimate the love of their early married life she had long given up.

Elizabeth was glad to know that her husband had returned, but at the same time experienced a feeling of indignation that she was unable to overcome. "He knew that I was standing by the window: why could he not have looked? Men are all egotists, little they care for a poor sick wife. I am only a burden to my husband," she thought, with added bitterness. Then with a quick, involuntary movement she clasped her wedding ring, saying sobbingly, "But he wed me with this ring, he dare not break his sacramental vow; only God himself can release him."

At that moment her husband entered the room. When he saw her white, sad face a sharp pang of reproach penetrated him. "You poor, dear girl,!"

he said pityingly, and taking her in his arms he pressed her warmly to his heart.

How infinitely sweet this tenderness was to the young wife! She compelled herself to smile through the mist of tears, fearing that they would drive him from her.

"It is a charming day, Elizabeth," he said kindly, "and the air is so balmy, let us take a walk together after dinner."

"If you wish it," she replied, then shrank affrighted at her answer, fearing he might suppose some hidden meaning lurked within her uttered words; for only recently, upon her complaint that he no longer loved her, he had become so angry that she could not think of it without a shudder. He had emphatically assured her at that time that the whole cause lay within herself alone. His magnanimous resolves were short-lived; he had forgotten that a weak, sick wife was the object of his unmanly wrath.

"I will be glad to go with you," he replied, and comforted her with assurance of returning health and strength with the incoming warm spring weather. The eventful walk was talked over at dinner, and it was decided that after she had taken a short rest they would stroll as far as the field that lay beyond the garden.

When Elizabeth awakened from her sleep, she saw to her disappointment that the sky was overcast, and even as she looked, large drops of rain were falling. Her husband was considerably re-

gretful for her sake. "As some compensation, will he not stay with me this afternoon?" she tremblingly thought. But, no, he could not. Seizing his cap, he left the room, saying he wished to get a newspaper which he understood conveyed fresh tidings of the uprising of the citizens and soldiery in Baden, promising that he would soon return.

Elizabeth felt her heart chilling again. "His conscience told him to stay," she thought; he might have denied himself for once for the sake of his wife and children; we certainly have some claim upon his time and attention; love is a forgotten thing to him." As she reflected on all she had lost, an agony of self-reproach overcame her, and while she strove to cast aside her unkind and resentful feelings, her husband unexpectedly returned.

He had found none of his comrades at home. He tried to hide his disappointment, saying with forced gayety, "Now I will entertain my wife and children."

If poor Elizabeth could only have resisted her rising indignation, and spoken of her pleasure at his return, for it *was* a pleasure to her—but she did not; she only smiled sadly.

"Shall I read to you?" he asked kindly. She inclined her head. "Or shall we have some music together?" he added. Frederick clamored loudly for music. Accordingly his parents seated themselves at the piano; the delighted child danced

joyously about the room. Running into the adjoining apartment to quiet his infant sister, he found upon his return that his father had risen from the instrument, thrown the music violently to the floor, and hastily left the room.

"Why will not papa play?" asked Frederick.

His mother paid no heed to the question, but sat motionless with grief. She alone had been to blame; "but is it right that he should be so hasty, so angry with me? Could he not have a little patience with me, when I have so much to bear?"

Soon, however, the door opened; the young officer entered, and, seating himself again at her side and taking her hand, said gravely, "Elizabeth, will you forgive me?"

"I was to blame," she answered in a low voice.

"Yes," he returned earnestly, "if you would only not provoke me so. You have no conception what an unhappy life I am leading. I am actually afraid of myself when I am with you."

The young wife only wept in answer. To hear such words from her husband's lips was a bitter humiliation. She felt at this moment more acute unhappiness than she had ever experienced in her life before, and knew that he spoke the truth. When they had sat silently side by side for some moments, he rose hurriedly and left the room.

The anniversary of the Frau Oberförsterin's birthday came in the following June, and was accordingly celebrated by a family gathering. Herr and Frau Kühneman and Emilie also, and her hus-

band, were at Woltheim. Although Elizabeth felt a certain repugnance at the prospect of meeting her coldly critical cousin and her observant Aunt Julchen, fearful that they might notice the alienation between her husband and herself, she acted a part strangely at variance with her nature, and let her husband feel that she yearned the more for the beloved faces and voices that would comfort her, and that all love was not lost, even if he had changed towards her.

Elizabeth fully accomplished the design she had in view, for before they set out and during the journey thitherward, she had fretted Kadden into an irritable mood. He was indisposed to accompany his wife, for he was well aware that he would be subjected to the all-observant, criticising eyes of the female portion of the company, and naturally felt disinclined to place himself under their microscopic analysis. That his sick wife was received with tender, pitying looks, did not better the situation, and as Elizabeth appeared more than usually happy and content, the more coldly silent and grave did her husband become. It was plain to him that his wife's family did not trust him, and that they divined Elizabeth's grief and disappointment. Aunt Julchen betrayed her customary want of tact, and Emilie's cold, critical attitude became at length intolerable to him. The young officer fancied that she looked down upon him with an unmistakable air of triumph. Frau Kühneman's grief-stricken face was a constant reproach to him, con-

sequently he avoided going near her. He felt isolated in this uncongenial company; a sense of loneliness oppressed him, a wave of memory carried him back to the old days when he had sat brooding over the old chest. His irritation grew stronger every hour, and the sense of estrangement became so accentuated that he could scarcely refrain from setting out at once for Braunhausen.

What Elizabeth began in pretense now made her heart heavy. She comprehended the reason of the dark cloud that rested upon her husband's brow. At last she could bear it no longer; her sensitive conscience impelled her to his side; looking in his grave face she timidly inquired, "Otto, are you sick?"

He looked at her coldly, and with marked emphasis responded, "Certainly not; how do you come to ask such a question?"

Elizabeth turned away with a sickening sense of his utter alienation from her. Her pale, sweet face quivered with grief as she recognized in these cold words and unresponsive looks a signal of dismissal, and token of an impending storm.

The watchfully observant Emilie noticed this brief conference between husband and wife. Taking the Oberförsterin aside, she said commiseratingly, "Poor Elizabeth! one may be truly sorry for her now. I must say that I am unable to comprehend how any mother can see her daughter at this man's side with any degree of tranquillity."

"Tranquillity!" repeated Julchen quickly, "Can

you not see that poor Elise has aged markedly during the past year? Her beautiful brown hair has become grey, and her bright spirits have utterly fled. Matters are only suffered to remain as they are because of the opposition of her husband and my parents to a separation."

"Yes, the stand that they have taken is incomprehensible to me," said Emilie. "They imagine that the cause of all their unhappiness lies in the state of Elizabeth's nerves, and anticipate a miraculous restoration of body and mind from the sanatory effects of the sea, whither they are going this summer; but sea-baths will not minister to a mind diseased," continued Emilie. "Love cannot be lasting between two natures so self-willed and hasty as they. I prophesied it from the beginning, but no one would believe me. When I recall the first weeks of their marriage . . . !"

"That was truly a lovely picture," interposed Aunt Julchen, eagerly, "it only enhances one's grief to look upon them as they now are."

"You have chosen your words admirably," continued Emilie; "a lovely *picture*—yes, a soap bubble in the sunshine; but I tell you Julchen," she added impressively, "we have not reached the end yet. I can see the sequel plainly. But if parents and grandparents do not trouble themselves over it, I need not."

During the evening, after Herr von Kadden and Elizabeth had retired and the circle had somewhat narrowed, Emilie turned the conversation upon the

young pair. Aunt Julchen proved a ready and sympathetic confederate. Her counsel, uttered oracularly, was that they should be warned at once of the abyss upon the brink of which they were standing, and admonished that but a short step remained from their present alienation to a permanent separation.

Julchen did not entirely agree with Emilie, for she believed that Elizabeth loved her husband and would never entertain the thought of a divorce.

"You are all deceived in Elizabeth's character," said Emilie; "she is so much in love with herself, and of so light and excitable a temperament, that affection with her can be quickly changed into aversion. Her pride will be aroused, and she will gladly escape from the treatment that she evidently receives from her husband."

Herr von Budmar had thus far listened quietly, but at this juncture interposed, saying earnestly, "Above all things, I warn you not to intermeddle between husband and wife. Do not even talk the matter over among yourselves; depend upon it, there is no profit in it."

"I felt sorry," said Frau Budmar, "for Otto to-day. He must have felt that your manner toward him was both hard and ungenerous. Elizabeth was greatly to blame. She has misled you in your estimate of her husband's real character."

"But, dear aunt," began Emilie hastily, with a premonitory shaking of the head.

"Let be, my child," interposed her aunt, "you

know well what I mean, and your good judgment must assent to it. Elizabeth is the most culpable. I would gladly excuse her on account of the miserable state of her health; but in my opinion, our better course at present is to comfort and cheer her husband, so that he may exercise patience and forbearance with her."

"We will dismiss the subject, dear aunt; I hope that I may be wrong, but I greatly fear the worst."

Mother and Aunt Julchen were silent. They evidently were upon Emilie's side of the question.

The old man again spoke, saying, "When Elizabeth's health is restored, matters will adjust themselves. Even if theirs is not a model marriage, I feel assured that neither of them has ever entertained the thought of a divorce. I, for one, will never consent to it," he added, with emphasis. "And now, in a word, I advise you to less family gossip and to more genuine sympathy." At the same time he held firm to his judgment that after Elizabeth's return from the seaside she should come to Woltheim and remain until the autumn, by which time he hoped her health would be fully restored.

Meanwhile Elizabeth sat by her husband's side on their journey homeward. At first she had feared an angry scene, but he remained coldly silent. She sought to talk with him, for she now longed, with all the strength of her being, to propitiate him; but all her efforts proved unavailing—he had been wounded too keenly. At length she

gave up her futile attempts, and sat silent and sad by his side.

The following morning she was alone; her husband had ridden out early, and without the usual greeting. She thought over the actions of the previous day, and was unable definitely to discover wherein she had offended. Her rising indignation grew stronger and stronger as she reflected. "If he neglects me, am I not justified in seeking comfort from my own family? I am sure of finding sympathy there. Am I not sick and unhappy? His anger will last all day, and he will leave me alone as usual." An irresistible longing took possession of her to be with her parents and sisters at dear old Woltheim. "There would be no trouble about it," she thought, "if I were strong enough to walk there. My husband would not notice my absence." She longed for comfort, for she felt thoroughly desolate.

At dinner Kadden acted as though nothing unpleasant had happened. He talked with his wife upon indifferent topics, and spoke kindly to his little son. When they had risen from the table, Elizabeth could no longer resist, but must speak of her wish to go to Woltheim, although an inner voice plainly admonished her to desist. She excused herself by saying, "If he thinks only about his own pleasure, why should I not for this once think of myself?—and besides, it is a natural wish for a daughter to entertain."

"They will all be together to-day in Woltheim,"

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she began hesitatingly. Her husband remained ominously silent. "I wish very much to be with them," she continued.

"To-day again?" he asked coldly.

"I will not see my parents and sisters during the summer, and whether I remain at home or not will make no material difference."

Her husband gave her a quick questioning glance. Had she been prudent she would have discontinued, but the thought that he could refuse her request and intended to forbid her going, roused her anger.

"It is very natural that I should wish to be there," she said querulously.

"I do not object to your going," he responded quickly.

"But I cannot walk there," she continued with rising excitement.

"You certainly do not wish to have a carriage again to-day?"

Her indignation rushed to her lips. "That would certainly be too much to ask," she said in a low distinct tone, as she left the room.

Elizabeth stood by the nursery window. She was in a state of feverish agitation. Her whole being rose in rebellion. Self will and her bad conscience urged her to anger, when suddenly she heard Herr von Kadden call to the groom to go for a carriage. She stood irresolute for a few moments, then went into her husband's room.

"Otto, I would rather stay at home," she said, with a choking sob.

He did not raise his eyes from his writing. Perchance had he seen the pale, sweet face, he would have answered differently.

"If the carriage comes, you will go," he said, without looking up.

"No, Otto, I would really rather stay at home," she answered tremulously.

"You will go," he repeated angrily, "and now I beg of you to leave me," he added, peremptorily.

Elizabeth left the room, and soon was on her road to Woltheim. The family were surprised at seeing her, her visit being wholly unexpected. She could not conceal her unhappiness. The mother's heart was heavy as she saw in her daughter's sad face a confirmation of Emilie's dread prophecy. She could not restrain her anxiety, but as soon as she and Elizabeth were alone with the grandmother, she questioned her about her dejection.

"Otto did not want me to come, and oh! I did so long to be with you," was her sobbing answer.

"Poor, dear child!" said the mother as she caressed the white, tear-stained cheeks.

But the grandmother said, "If your husband objected to your coming, you should have stayed at home."

Elizabeth sadly shook her head; she would say nothing further on the subject; and when, in a short time, she set out upon her return to Braunhausen, neither her mother nor grandmother urged her to remain.

After Elizabeth's departure the young officer did not seek the wonted society of his comrades. Politics did not interest him to-day. In order to be alone, he paced thoughtfully up and down the field adjoining the garden. So unhappy he had never felt in his life before. "Little can pride avail when the soul is left desolate, and self-satisfaction is feebler still." How did his wife's family regard him? How captiously and ungenerously those women had treated him! Again and again he sought to excuse his conduct towards his wife. "Again and again the might of a shadowy and unacknowledged truth put him to silence."

After this colloquy with himself, he returned from his walk with a firm determination to fulfil his duty towards his wife. With this specious resolve, with which he had deceived himself before, he took up his burden, neither satisfied nor humbled by his reflections.

He had been back but a short time when Elizabeth returned home. He felt a sense of proud satisfaction that he had obtained so great a mastery over himself, but his heart was still unquiet and unsatisfied. Suddenly he heard his wife's footsteps in the adjoining apartment; the door opened, and advancing toward him she laid her head timidly on his shoulder, and sobbed out, "Otto, do not be angry with me."

This action was truly unexpected. He was heartily glad to be supplicated.

"I am not angry with you, Elizabeth," was his brief but quiet reply.

She threw her arms around his neck, and sobbed out with her face against his, "Forgive me, I am so unhappy."

"I forgive you," he said composedly; "but now try to calm yourself; we must not make our burdens heavier than we can bear. All will come right some day."

She looked at him sadly. If he would only permit her to speak out! Her timid efforts towards a return of mutual love and confidence would else be all in vain. "Such a relation could come only by open speech about their differences; he cared for no mutual explanations." She was helplessly conscious of her failure, but her indignation gone, she said in a submissive and conciliatory tone, "Otto, I did wrong; I am very much to blame."

"I pray you desist, Elizabeth; we will forget all about it in a short time," he said, coldly. "I assure you that I am not angry with you."

She was dumb, a chill about her heart; as she extended her hands with a pitiful, forlorn smile, her husband conducted her to the door, kissed her mechanically upon her upturned brow, and suffered her to enter her room alone.

Here she sat for long. That her husband was changed toward her, she now felt assured. "The old love will never come back; he desires no explanation between us, only an outward calm." Elizabeth was of too genuinely true and candid a nature to be satisfied with this conclusion. "Nothing remains for me but submission," she thought, with

a shudder, "and patience. How shall I bear it?" Her warm; earnest soul cried out for her husband's love. How would her hungry, thirsty heart bear the days and the years that stretched so hopelessly before her? Her constrained calmness forsook her, and she wept convulsively.

Herr von Kadden sat in his room, but his work interested him no longer; he reached out his hand undecidedly for his cap, which lay on the table beside him. He was conscious of his coldness toward his wife; he well knew her loving nature—the especial need of her sensitive heart for comfort and support. He felt disgusted with himself that he had not been able to conduct himself as he should have done.

Elizabeth appeared at dinner as usual. Her husband knew that she had been weeping, but he acted as though he did not perceive it. He was attentive and kind, but the stricken heart opposite him saw the effort it cost him, and sadly thought, "I must accustom myself to be resigned; I will not reproach him. God will give me grace to be submissive." "But the heart is a refractory thing, particularly a warm heart; one hour it can be resolved to one course of action, and the next to another."

"Yet this very instability of human things, O, blessed wisdom of God, is in the perfection of Thy decrees; that by it we may be compelled to seek after solid and unchangeable good."

. . .

CHAPTER XXIII.

A FORTNIGHT had elapsed since the incidents related in the last chapter. Elizabeth and her husband had, during this interval, been very guarded in their intercourse with each other; but notwithstanding all their precaution, the days did not pass happily. And now the time had arrived when the final preparation must be made for their journey. The physician had decided upon Wangeroge as the most desirable location for their summer sojourn. Elizabeth's nerves would there, he hoped, recover tone, and besides, the sea baths would prove beneficial for the headaches from which Herr von Kadden had been suffering of late more violently and more frequently. This journey had been much talked over, not only in their immediate family circle, but also among the entire connection. Frau Budmar was confident that this sojourn by the sea would thoroughly establish Elizabeth's health, and consequently re-act favorably upon her husband's mental condition. The grandmother accepted it as a good omen that the young officer had requested a furlough so that he might remain with his sick wife during her stay at Wangeroge. Emilie and Aunt Julchen manifested great surprise at this, for they had accepted the present unfortu-

nate state of affairs as a fulfilment of their predictions.

For some time rumors had been rife, not only in Elizabeth's family connection, but among von Kadden's friends, who naturally were greatly interested in the matter and the anticipated result, and who had arrived at the conclusion that the difficulty did not by any means lie in the state of Elizabeth's nerves. Stottenheim could not resist talking over the trouble with the inquisitive daughters of the Commandant. In his weak kind-heartedness, he scarce knew whether to take Elizabeth's part or that of his good friend Kadden. "Frau Kadden," he would say, "is an exceptionally sensitive, refined and charming woman; and as for my comrade, he is one of the noblest men upon God's earth."

"No, she is an affected, self-opinioned, self-willed creature," said Adolfine. "That Kadden was hasty and impetuous, she knew before she married him. It must be intolerable for a man of his temperament to be tied to a woman who entertains such preposterous views of life as she does."

The Colonel, who had taken part in the conversation upon this particular occasion, gave it emphatically as his opinion that there was no way out of such a difficulty but by an unconditional separation, citing in proof some circumstances relating to a cousin of his. "Affairs," he said, "had gone on from bad to worse, until they found that the only solution of the problem lay in a divorce."

He had anticipated a similar result when he heard of the marriage of this young Hotspur, and nothing could have proved more favorable to such a result than the Pietistic tendencies of the one-sided family with which he had connected himself. "He will rattle his chains for a time," said the Colonel, with grim jocoseness, "then with a desperate wrench he will break them asunder."

Stottenheim, although he genuinely deplored such a termination, could not but confess that he had long secretly entertained like views. "Although," he added, "I must say that I have not one objection to the Budmarschen family; notwithstanding their extreme religious views, they are exceptionally estimable and worthy people. For myself, these contentions would be a matter of indifference; but to one of Kadden's temperament, they can be productive only of violent opposition, or of an utter subversion of all friendship between them."

Elizabeth's pleasant anticipations revived her energies. She looked forward cheerfully and hopefully to the proposed journey and sojourn in the island of Wangerogé. Her grandmother encouraged her by many comforting assurances of a speedy restoration to her former health and spirits, and her heart was especially grateful that her husband had consented to her request that the children should accompany them.

Upon the evening before the journey, after she had completed all necessary arrangements for their

departure, she wandered into the garden to cool her fevered cheeks in the pure dewy air. Her husband found her standing thoughtfully beside one of the blossoming rose trees. She had just plucked some lovely, fragrant buds; her cheeks were softly flushed, and she looked, for the time, happy. As her husband advanced to her side she noticed that his eyes rested upon her more tenderly than usual. This was as a warm sunbeam to Elizabeth's chilled, doubting heart. Raising her clear, candid eyes to his, she said, naïvely, "If these rosebuds bloom in Wangeroge by the sea, I will take it as a sign of my restoration to health."

"Elizabeth," he exclaimed, remonstrantly, "the roses may wither upon our journey, you would then be apt to fancy that the means proposed would prove inefficacious; you had better leave the roses here if your hopes depend upon these frail flowers."

"Oh, no; I will not leave them," she returned, with a laugh, in her old, charming, willful manner.

"Leave them for my sake," he said, as he placed his arm gently around her.

Elizabeth gazed earnestly in her husband's face. The tone and the look stirred her whole being, but she had learned not to trust to his transient emotions. Silently she handed him the flowers. He took them, then placing them again in her hand, said, kindly, "Take them with you, Elizabeth; they may give you some pleasure to-morrow on the journey, and in the evening we will throw them away."

Early upon the following morning they set out upon their trip. It was delightfully cool, and the children at first gave but little trouble. The journey, however, was long, and as the day advanced, the weather was intensely warm. The little Frederick accordingly became restless and fretful. Upon finding that his mother was disinclined to answer his many and persistent questions, he devoted himself to annoying his father, who now leaned back wearily in the seat, and complained of his accustomed headache.

The old nurse did all in her power to quiet the now two crying children. All her attempts proved unsuccessful, and our party of travelers arrived in Hanover not only fatigued, but very much out of humor.

Here they were to dine. Kadden, instead of making arrangements for the comfort of his little family, threw himself upon a lounge in the reception-room, looking pale and worn out. Elizabeth knew that he was suffering. If she could only have obtained the mastery over self, and have given her husband a word or look of sympathy! She feared that if she did so he would wave her off impatiently, as had been his wont of late; and this, in her present condition of fatigue and nervousness, she felt would be more than she could bear. With the love which she really had for her husband there mingled still some resentful feelings. Was she not as sick and as weary as he? Had he manifested the slightest consideration for her throughout the

journey? Amid all her genuine grief over the changed attitude of her husband toward her, she ever placed her own troubles first in her catalogue of grievances. Indignation and grief by turns arose in her heart; "and as pride is an unsurmountable barrier to faith, so is it also to love; the grace of humility, which makes both love and faith easy, is not the natural feeling of the carnal heart."

After Elizabeth and the children had partaken of some refreshments, Johanna and Wilhelm considerably took the latter from the room, so that they should not disturb their sick master, who still reclined upon the couch, with white face and closed eyes. Elizabeth stood by the window in the silent room, looking out upon the broad, quiet platz, where at intervals an occasional pedestrian passed by—new faces, each and every one. The sky looked afar off and coldly blue above the roofs of the unfamiliar houses. For the first time in her young life she found herself in a strange world; she felt peculiarly isolated and alone. Looking up into the blue depths of the sky, she sadly thought, "If I loved the dear God I would not feel so desolate," but there was no strength or comfort to her in the thought.

About four o'clock the train started; the children were rested, the evening cool, and there remained but a few short hours of their journey. The little ones slept, their parents resting meanwhile undisturbedly, and all were surprised as the train steamed into Bremen.

Now came the most unpleasant part of the journey—the unpacking, the examination of the luggage, and the choice of a hotel. To a clear, healthy brain these details are annoying; and in spite of his increasing headache, the young husband neglected nothing.

At length the hotel was reached, and Elizabeth and the children were conducted to a pleasant, cheerful room, while Kadden was still occupied with the further disposition of the luggage. At last, congratulating himself that he had done all that was needed, he entered the room and said, wearily, "I have ordered the porter to bring the traveling-satchels to the hotel; the trunks I have given in charge of an official, who will see that they are taken to the steamer early to-morrow morning."

"But one of the trunks I must have here," exclaimed Elizabeth, hastily, "so that I can pack the articles which I am to purchase to-morrow."

"You expect to do some shopping here?" asked her husband, irritably.

"You knew that I intended doing so," she answered.

Her husband *did* know this before starting; it had been distinctly understood between them. Owing to her long-continued sickness, Elizabeth had not made any additions to her wardrobe. She had been advised to defer making any purchases until her arrival in Bremen, whose shops were celebrated for the beauty and tastefulness of their goods. Kadden had himself proposed accompany-

ing his wife upon her shopping excursion, and had promised, should she prove too much fatigued, to make all needful purchases for her.

Elizabeth, annoyed by her husband's ignoring all that was so distinctly understood between them, made no allowance for his headache and obvious ill temper at the mistake he had made. She certainly had had enough experience not to insist upon what she knew would be a source of annoyance to him in his present mood. With an increasing spirit of opposition, she thought, "If he loved me he would not have spoken as he has done. It is all one to him now whether I have anything to wear or not; it is hard for me to be compelled to ask him for even what is absolutely necessary." So passed these gloomy thoughts through her mind, when her husband, rising suddenly, advanced toward her, and with some softening of voice, said, "I *do* remember, Elizabeth, that you intended making some purchases here; but I beg you, let me rest for to-day."

"If you have ordered the trunks to the steamer early to-morrow morning, what can be done about it anyhow?" she asked peevishly.

"Go then and get all you want," he said coldly, as he handed her his purse.

"Shall I go alone, in this strange city?" she continued in the same petulant manner.

"Take Wilhelm with you," was his curt answer.

"A short time ago you would not have spoken so to me," was her bitter retort.

"I beg of you, Elizabeth, be silent. Do not torment me to-day," was his imperative command.

"I never dare to reproach you, I must always be silent. I would not expect you to give way even when I am right."

"I shall be angry if you speak another word," he replied, with rising wrath, as he stood threateningly before her.

Elizabeth thought, "I am becoming accustomed to his outbursts of anger: my precaution and self-restraint for these last few weeks have been more than I can bear. I *will* speak, he *shall* hear me, 'Yes, you are always angry and unkind to me,'" she said, with a tremor in her voice, "while you are courteous to every one else."

"Elizabeth, be quiet," he repeated.

"I must suffer and submit," she continued; "our maid receives kindness at your hands . . .
. . . while your wife"

"You *shall* be silent," he now cried, unable any longer to control himself, as in his excitement he raised his hand threateningly. Had she not instinctively bowed her head, he would have struck her.

Her first emotion was to fall at his feet and ask his forgiveness, when she heard him mutter, angrily, "You torment of my life!"

Alas! these words changed her sorrow into indignation. "He intended to strike you," she said to herself; "*you*, the mother of his children. He has no love for you. The past is nothing to him. *All is now over!*"

When her husband had recovered from his dismay at what he had done, he advanced with some hesitation and would have taken her hand. She shrank shudderingly from him. "Elizabeth," he said in an imploring tone, "have pity upon me. You brought this upon yourself." She only shrank the more, and did not raise her eyes from the floor. "Elizabeth, forgive me," he said again, attempting to take her hand.

With an imperious gesture she waved him back, and said in low, trembling tones, "Never, never; our love is a thing of the past. All is over between us, and it is better so."

He hardly knew whether to be shocked or enraged at these terrible words. Turning quickly from her, he stepped to the window.

She only now noticed what in her excitement had at first escaped her. In her sudden movement to avoid the threatened blow she had struck her temple upon the sharp corner of the *escritoire*. The wound pained her intensely; warm drops of blood coursed down her neck; she felt faint, and reaching the sofa with difficulty, sank down upon it. Now Emilie's dread prophecy was veritably fulfilled. Oh! the terror of the thought. She could have died without one fear. Life or death was all the same to her.

As her husband turned from the window he saw his wife lying upon the sofa, pale as death, with closed eyes, and drops of blood falling upon her white collar. "What have you done, Elizabeth?" he exclaimed in affright.

"I struck my head," she replied coldly, "but it does not matter, it is nothing." As she spoke she wiped the blood away with her handkerchief, and again closed her eyes.

At this moment the waiter entered to receive their orders for supper. Rising hurriedly, she passed into the adjoining room, and with dull despair, threw herself upon the bed.

Herr von Kadden called the nurse and told her that her mistress had hurt her head, and needed arnica and water to apply to the wound. The hostess was a kind, obliging woman, and, upon hearing of the accident, at once procured the proper appliances and hastened to the room. Elizabeth saw her enter, saw her husband hand her a linen cloth, but as they approached the bed she closed her eyes. It was impossible for her to speak. Silently she submitted to the examination of the wound and to the application of the wet bandage.

"A dangerous place," whispered the woman, "God be thanked that it is no worse."

The following morning the young officer and his children breakfasted alone. Elizabeth still lay with closed eyes, although her husband was convinced that she was not asleep. Leaving the hotel, the restraint of which had become intolerable to him, he strolled into the adjoining park. The beauty of the town had no charm for him, but it was a relief to walk in the shaded pleasure-grounds. Crowds of people, rich and poor, passed and re-passed him on his monotonous round, but each

and every one was indifferent to him and his troubles. A stranger in a strange land, he could wander at will without attracting attention, yet longing for the ship that would carry him farther and still farther from all his former acquaintances. How would it have been possible for him to encounter Stottenheim, whose officious inquisitiveness had so frequently tormented him? His comrade's recently uttered words came to his mind with irresistible force: "It is a misfortune that your wife entertains such ideal views of life. She expects too much of you. A man cannot pose as a bridegroom forever. You both take life too seriously. A more charming being than your young wife I have yet to meet. She was so refined, so attractive!" "You speak in the past tense: is she so no longer?" he himself had sharply asked. "She certainly is," was his friend's reply; "and *that* is her misfortune, for you, my dear friend, are not as you were: the gist of all your mutual troubles lies in this nut-shell." "You are mistaken," he remembered himself to have answered indignantly, "our ideal views of life occasion us no annoyance, only the miserable views held by the people who live in your world. I would rather all my life strive with my temper than that my wife should be a whit less sensitive than she now is."

As the unhappy young man wandered through the park, he lived again through all the past scenes associated with his wretched wife. Her image as a bride, the early days of their wedded love,

when he was all in all to her, when *she* pleased every gentle element of his nature, when *he* was so sensitive to her spiritual needs. Was her need less now than then? No; much greater, for she had forgotten duty and silenced conscience in the distractions of the world, whose poisonous breath had penetrated her child-like being. This thought was a sharp reproach. In deep despair he felt that he had been the cause of her alienation from her God, and now, when he had compassed this result, *his* love had failed her. Thus had he excluded the one faint ray of sunshine from her innocent life.

The remembrance of the last sad occurrence stung him to the soul. What must be her agony? "No one to whom she could tell her grief, alone with a husband whom she had good right to fear, in whose power she is; what a humiliation! He felt ashamed of himself as he reflected that he, who should have been to her a refuge from the wind, a shield from the storm, had—. Could his love comfort her no longer? No, that blessed time was past and gone forever.

Worn out with the same torturing round of bitter reflections, he returned to the hotel and found the children and their nurse in the entrance hall. Inquiring after his wife, Johanna informed him that her lady had risen for a short time to attend to the packing; that the wound being still painful, she had not slept during the night, but had again lain down, hoping to get a little rest.

As he was arranging with the porter about conveying the luggage to the steamer, he bethought himself of the unfortunate purchases. Accordingly he made inquiry of Johanna as to what was required. She told him that she had heard her Gracious Lady say that she expected to purchase a hat and wrap, and that both children needed jackets.

"You could have the articles sent to the hotel," said the complaisant hostess. "Your Lady would then have the advantage of a choice."

The young officer, after receiving the required information, started out with nurse and children. He was attentively waited on by the obsequious *modiste*, who seemed willing and anxious to place her entire stock at his disposal; but Kadden was so gravely silent and unresponsive to her friendly suggestions that she turned to the sensible, interested maid, requesting her to describe her gracious lady's *tout ensemble*, as she would then be better able to advise becoming and suitable articles of apparel.

The young husband listened silently and with strange emotion to Johanna's admiring, enthusiastic description of the slender, graceful form, and the fair, sweet face of his young wife. It was to him as if Elizabeth was dead, and only the remembrance of his former happiness survived. But when the *modiste* suggested a chip hat, with either cherry or blue trimmings, he answered, quickly, "Blue." That was the color she had worn when he had first seen her. A pretty blue velvet wrap

was also selected, as well as suitable jackets for the children. Arrangements were made that these articles should be properly packed to carry safely to their destination.

• Meanwhile Elizabeth lay upon her bed. The night had passed without sleep ; her nervous tension being great, she could not even think coherently, her only definite feeling being that her husband might punish her by changing his plans and returning to Braunhausen. To meet her grandparents now would have been a greater trouble than any other hardship she could be called upon to endure. After she had finished repacking, Johanna entered the room with a cup of broth which she could prevail upon her mistress to drink only upon the condition that she was to remain undisturbed during the dinner hour. Before leaving, the skillful nurse renewed the wet bandage, and left her dear lady comfortably resting upon the couch.

In order to escape the torture of the remembrance of the late occurrence, Elizabeth busied herself with thoughts of her youth. Old memories crowded upon her. She thought of the innocent, joyous days at dear old Woltheim until, worn out with thought and grief, she fell into an uneasy sleep.

The young officer finding upon his return that Elizabeth still slept, noiselessly opened the door and stepped softly to the couch upon which his sorrowful wife was lying. Her head had fallen to

one side and lay sunk upon her breast. The white bandage and pillow accentuated the pallor of her white face; her small, delicate hands were folded upon her bosom. How pale, how fragile, how troubled she looked! He could gaze no longer upon the sad picture; hot tears filled his eyes; he turned away and walked to the window, which overlooked a small, unfrequented court, and gazed out disconsolately.

"What a poor, miserable being you are," he thought; "where now is your vaunted heaven of a good conscience, where your boasted morality, your chivalry? Will conscience suffice to guide you now?" Scene after scene of his life passed accusingly before his mental vision. Suddenly, as a ray of light from the upper world these words came forcibly to his heart: "He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness." Do God's will, and await with patience His blessing. Your love, your good resolutions, your morality, have not helped you thus far. Try God's way. To Him you may bring your repentance, your humility and your weary heart. "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless till it resteth in Thee."

His eye fell upon his betrothal ring, then upon Elizabeth's as it gleamed upon the poor, sorrow-stricken breast. "Have I cherished my wife as my own body, as I solemnly vowed I would do, in the presence of God and man? How little consideration have I shown during her long illness, and her nervous prostration, which I have aug-

mented by angry words and unmanly altercation!" What a comfort it was to him now to feel assured of the views and the position of his wife's family upon the subject of divorce. "Elizabeth is mine till death; it was a sacramental vow from which no one but God can release us." Then with dull despair and a shuddering sense of coming ill the fearful words sounded and re-sounded in his ears. "*Never, never; our love is a thing of the past.*"

CHAPTER XXIV.

AT noon, by Johanna's advice, Elizabeth was not awakened. She was unable to eat anything, and needed all the sleep and rest that she could get to prepare her for the fatigue of the journey. At two o'clock the carriage drove up to convey the travelers to the steamer; accordingly Kadden entered the chamber to awaken his wife, and found her still sleeping soundly, her cheeks slightly flushed. He called her softly by name; slowly she opened her eyes. She had not yet fully regained consciousness, and at first vaguely remembering what had happened, looked up at her husband in her old, sweet, childlike way. Surely she had been dreaming, and the last sad occurrence was but a horrible nightmare. After a few moments, however, consciousness returned, and rising quickly, a heightened color suffusing her pale face as her eyes sought the floor, she hurriedly made the necessary preparations, and was soon ready to proceed.

Upon going on board the steamer, Elizabeth at once retired to the ladies' cabin. She had no desire to mingle with the rest of the passengers, neither did she wish to be alone with her husband. Johanna, who some few years since accompanied her former mistress, the Frau Oberförsterin, to the

island of Nordernei, and had therefore some little experience of steamboat traveling, now made all necessary preparations that would contribute to the comfort of her lady and the children during the coming night. Among a variety of other articles which she removed from her well-filled traveling basket was a bunch of beautiful crimson roses. These she quickly and deftly transferred to a glass of fresh water. Elizabeth raised her languid head, and asked in suppressed excitement, "Where did you get those roses, Johanna?"

The kind nurse was overjoyed at these, the first voluntary words that her dear mistress had uttered since her accident. Cheerily she answered that she had brought them from Braunhausen, having carefully packed them in damp moss before starting. She had unwrapped them from their cool covering yesterday evening at Bremen; finding them beautifully fresh, she had repacked them in the hope that they would bloom in Wangeroge, for she knew that there was a scarcity of flowers upon the island.

Frederick carried the roses to his mother that she might inhale their fragrance. Elizabeth had just bowed her head over the lovely flowers when the cabin door opened and a lady entered. She was a majestic-looking woman, of dignified bearing, with large, unfathomable brown eyes, and a heavy coronal of glossy brown braids. She was accompanied by two children, a little girl of perhaps ten years of age and a boy a few years younger.

"Ah! here are children," she said, in an agreeable tone of voice; "that is pleasant. We will secure a place in the cabin too."

Elizabeth instinctively turned her face away from the stranger's observation, and silently listened as the lady talked pleasantly with the children, (whose names, Paul and Anna, she soon learned), and was glad that Johanna, who noticed her mistress' look of annoyance, said, "Now children, we will go on deck; mamma is sick and must be quiet."

The ship was soon in motion. Elizabeth's berth lay under a small window, from which she could watch the restless waves. She gazed upon the ceaseless flow until she became dizzy, then languidly closed her eyes. Her mind travelled back over the past. Hours elapsed; the cabin door was frequently opened and people peered curiously within. Johanna came at intervals and tried to persuade her mistress to come upon deck, but Elizabeth could not force herself to go. It was now seven o'clock, and the faithful nurse carried the sleeping Marie to the cabin. Again she described to her dear mistress the grandeur of the view, and spoke of the additional comfort her Lady would enjoy in the fresh, cool evening breeze. The young mother anxiously inquired after her little son, and was told that he was with his father, who, in company with several of the gentlemen, had gone to the upper deck, where there was more room to promenade.

Elizabeth hesitated no longer, but left the stifling cabin and uncomfortable couch. With downcast eyes, she followed Johanna through the crowd of strange people and seated herself upon a chair, which stood near the helm, her youthful, fragile appearance exciting the interest of the passengers.

Soon after she had taken her seat her husband approached, leading his little son by the hand. The sympathy of the bystanders was now redoubled. This grave man must be the husband, and the two little ones the children of this beautiful woman. The young officer was uncomfortably conscious of this scrutiny, and accordingly soon withdrew.

Elizabeth had been sitting almost motionless for an hour; the cool invigorating breeze was like a benediction to her fevered brow. She no longer thought of the strangers who lingered in her neighborhood, attracted by her sad white face. Frederick now came to bid his mother good night, and begged her to come and pray with him as she did at home. She promised the child that she would do so, and soon after followed him to the cabin.

How disagreeable it was to find the strange lady established there with her children! Gladly would she have deferred the now unpleasant duty, but Frederick had already assumed an attitude of devotion and looked expectantly at his mother. Elizabeth, urged to self-control, compelled herself to the effort and knelt down by the side of her

child. When the boy had reverently repeated his little prayer, his mother said softly, "Amen; the dear God guard thee, my son." Then, after a loving kiss, turning herself in some embarrassment to the door, and raising her eyes, she saw the stranger and the two children standing reverently with folded hands, as though accustomed to the exercise.

When Elizabeth returned to the deck she found her chair occupied. Seating herself upon a bench near by, and averting her face as much as possible from the curious glances of the passers-by, she looked thoughtfully out over the broad expanse of water. Immediately opposite to her sat her husband. His mind was so preoccupied that he had not noticed her coming. With folded arms he leaned upon the railing, gazing gloomily down into the waters of the pitiless sea.

Twilight had deepened; star after star gleamed clear and bright in the quiet evening sky. The lady with the dark brown eyes sat leaning against the side of the cabin, and by her side stood a tall, stately man.

"You may believe me, Ernest," the wife said in a low tone, "they are both unhappy." Her husband's eyes followed the same direction as his wife's. "For upwards of two hours they have sat opposite each other without exchanging one word or look of sympathy. One cannot help but pity them. I know not which of them I am most sorry for."

Herr von Hohendorf responded laughingly, "You imagine all that, Anna. I am of the prosaic opinion that they are both sea-sick, which is amply sufficient reason for their present unsympathetic mood. You are the only one, I venture to say, of all the passengers, occupied in weaving a romance or tragedy in connection with them."

"I am satisfied that I am right in my judgment," was the wife's quick reply. "You are afraid that I will ask you to enter into conversation with the gentleman."

"Shall I go to him and inquire why he is sad, and implore him to let me share his trouble?" he said with a smile.

"No, I will not go that far," she answered, "but certainly there would be no impropriety in engaging in a commonplace conversation with him. Wangeroge is their goal as well as ours, and doubtless we would find them pleasant acquaintances. If you have no objection, I will speak to the wife."

"I have no objection; on the contrary I will follow your good example and try to engage the gentleman in discourse."

Without further delay Frau Hohendorf rose, and seating herself upon the bench by Elizabeth's side, said quietly, "Our dear children are sleeping very sweetly."

"They are weary with their journey," returned Elizabeth, without looking at her interlocutor.

"How fascinating," resumed the stranger, after a short pause, "it is to watch these restless waves. Is this your first experience of old ocean?" she inquired.

Elizabeth only inclined her head in answer.

"I am unable to describe just how it affects me; at first the wide expanse and the endless roar made me feel my utter insignificance; my heart was too narrow to enjoy its immensity, its awfulness."

Elizabeth suddenly raised her head and gave a quick glance into the brown eyes that rested so kindly upon her.

"I have been thinking," she continued "how it would be if our ship were wrecked and I were cast alone upon one of these sandy islands, far from all I love, and must hear this incessant roar sounding in my ears, and listen to the billows ever beating upon the shore."

Elizabeth's eyes involuntarily sought her husband. She also had been indulging in similar thoughts. Frau Hohendorf understood the look. Elizabeth's clear, candid eyes could not hide her feelings.

Twilight was deepening, quiet was settling down upon the ship. "Shall we not go below to our children?" asked the stranger.

"Oh! no," replied Elizabeth hastily, "I intend to remain on deck all night. It is far pleasanter here than in the cabin."

Frau Hohendorf made several attempts to alter

her intention. She feared the cold night air would be injurious to one so fragile.

At this juncture the two gentlemen approached. They were both reticent men, rather indisposed to form new acquaintances. Herr von Kadden perchance in his present mood would have repelled all advances on the stranger's part, had he not already noticed the lady's kindness to his children, and now also to his wife. Acquaintance had been initiated, and for some while they had been pleasantly chatting together upon topics in which they were mutually interested.

As they drew near the ladies, Herr von Hohendorf could not repress some slight curiosity. He was now fully convinced that Herr von Kadden was not suffering from sea-sickness, and he smiled as he thought that his wife had proved no novice in mind-reading.

After mutual presentations had taken place, Herr von Hohendorf suggested that it would be advisable for the ladies to retire to the cabin, to which his wife replied that Frau von Kadden had concluded to remain on deck for the night.

"You had much better go below, Elizabeth," said her husband, quietly; "you will be sure to take cold, exposed to the night air."

Elizabeth did not reply, but at once made preparation to descend. She felt embarrassed by the close scrutiny of the strange gentleman.

Her husband noticed her look of annoyance, and said solicitously, "You must drink a cup of tea

before you go, Elizabeth, for you ate no supper." Meanwhile the waiter brought the refreshment which Herr von Kadden had ordered and placed it upon a small table which stood near.

Frau Hohendorf with her husband now turned away, and gazed thoughtfully at the starry firmament above her and then at its reflection in the water beneath, saying in a low tone, "What a singular pair they are, Ernest. With what solicitude he handed his wife the cup of tea, which she drank just like a child, solely because he wished her to."

"Perhaps she is melancholy."

"Oh! no," said his wife with emphasis, "not by any means. I have divined what is the matter, Ernest. They have quarrelled."

Her husband laughed. "No doubt you can tell, Anna, which of the two is in fault."

"You may laugh, Ernest, but I am right. They are both unhappy, and this accounts for the apparent lack of sympathy between them."

Elizabeth now hastened to the cabin. She shrank from a renewal of conversation with the persistent stranger. She had been conscious of appearing moved, and dreaded showing any further feeling. Her husband carried her wrap as far as the door, extending his hand as he said good night, but Elizabeth's heart was too heavy to respond to his greeting, save by a low suppressed sob.

The morning dawned; the ship weighed anchor, remaining stationary for some hours awaiting high

tide, rendering it practicable for the boats to approach the vessel and convey the passengers to land.

It seemed as though the entire population of the island had gathered upon the shore to welcome the voyagers, whose ears were regaled by animating strains of music that reached them through the clear morning air. Frau von Hohendorf was perfectly enchanted with the charming prospect. The little island surrounded by the deep blue sea was bathed in a flood of golden light; verdant hills gleamed with intense vividness; picturesque cottages were scattered here and there, and charming pleasure-grounds invited the weary voyagers to their tranquil restfulness. Here in this fairy island to lead a happy idle life, to consort for weeks to come with husband and children, would be to her unalloyed enjoyment.

To Elizabeth on the contrary the enlivening strains only excited in her sad breast an uncontrollable homesickness, an irresistible longing for Braunhausen, for the happy days long past. She had taken her little son upon her lap. Silently and unnoticed, her bitter tears fell drop by drop upon the child's fair curls.

In the general confusion of landing and the hunting for accommodations, Elizabeth's disquiet had escaped observation. Soon she found herself established in a bright little cottage close by the sea. The house contained but two bed-rooms, one of which was allotted to the children and their

faithful nurse; the larger and better apartment was assigned by the young officer to his wife.

Elizabeth stood thoughtfully by the window gazing out upon the little garden, and upon the hills and cottages scattered over the island. The profound stillness, broken only by the "soft, monotonous cadence of the long waves as they broke upon the sandy beach," was soothing to her unquiet nerves. By this arrangement she was not obliged, except as she pleased, to mingle with the rest of the guests.

At this moment her husband entered the room. The thought which had been troubling her was intensified at his appearance: "Will I be obliged to be constantly with him?" But she checked the resentful thoughts that crowded upon her as she saw his troubled looks. Her first impulse was to leave the room and take refuge with her children, who were playing before the door, but with an effort she remained. Suddenly he advanced to her side and said gravely, "Elizabeth, will you not speak to me?"

A quick meaningless "Yes" escaped her lips. She was so nervous and weak that she shrank from her husband's dark looks as he stood before her.

"Will you not go with the children to the beach?" he asked, with studied gentleness.

"I wish to remain alone," she answered. Then, fearful that he would misinterpret her words, she added quickly, "I would prefer to rest awhile."

Her husband left the room. He had no heart to play with his children, and without delay sought the solitary shore, where he paced restlessly up and down. The painful consciousness that Elizabeth feared him gathered strength as he reflected.

Colonel von Bonsak's words came with force to his mind. "If matters have progressed so far between husband and wife that their lives are a burden, it is decidedly better for them to separate." That he and Elizabeth had now reached this point he no longer doubted; his wife longed for a release. "*All is over.*" These words were ever sounding in his ears. "Her heart has been long estranged. I have been blind till now. I have tried to soften her, but she seems to have lost the power of speaking to me, or even of looking at me. I can no longer deceive myself: the last unhappy climax is only the result of a long preparation; the storm has not come from an unclouded sky. It has been most incredible egotism upon my part that I was unprepared for its approach. The world would say: 'Torment yourself no longer;' it would advise surrender of all sweet-home happiness. The reasons seem sensible and pertinent."

The longer he reflected the deeper grew the conviction that the fancies he had been indulging were in truth realities. Yet in the midst of these gloomy thoughts, old sweet memories crowded back upon his heart, and made the faintest intimation of a separation a sharp and bitter pain. "Would it not be unmanly, ungenerous upon my part, to subject

my wife to the humiliation of my undesired society. Would it not be better to return to Bremen—to Braunhausen? Why need we care for the curiosity of the world, or for the gossip of friend or acquaintance? It would be far better for Elizabeth to be at Woltheim with her grandparents. There she might learn to seek and to find the help which she has ignored since she has been with me."

CHAPTER XXV.

WITH a heavy heart, not knowing in what mood he would find his wife, Kadden returned to the cottage and found Johanna in the kitchen with the servants. When she saw her master she stepped gently to the door, saying in a low tone, "They are all asleep."

Noiselessly entering the room, he saw Elizabeth reclining with her head resting upon the hard back of the sofa. She had evidently been weeping, but was now asleep, an open book upon her lap.

He saw that it was the Bible. A ray of light illumined the night of his unhappiness. She was seeking help, and would find it. Bending over her he cast his eyes upon the open page and read the words, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." How was it that the cloud which had hitherto enveloped him was suddenly rent, that light streamed into his gloomy heart! "She will strive to overcome the anger that now fills her soul, and with God's help she will succeed. 'I will lift up *mine* eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh *my* help.'"

An irresistible desire took possession of him to learn what further the Lord would say to him. He feared that it might disturb his wife should he remove the Bible from her lap. Accordingly enter-

ing the adjoining room he approached a small table upon which lay, as he had expected, two books. Taking one of them, he hastily left the house.

The tide was rising, the waves roared and foamed, and beat restlessly upon the sandy beach. Seating himself upon the grassy ledge of a hillock some distance from the house, he gazed meditatively upon the rolling billows. Each wave seemed to bring upon its crest strength and courage to his weak, fainting soul. Opening the Book he read, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. I have sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests and not comforted, behold I will lay thy stones with fair colors and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones." When he had read he looked again upon the heaving billows; he drew a long, deep breath, filling his chest with a draught of the life-giving air. Turning to the Psalms, he read, "My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot

to be moved. He that keepeth thee will not slumber."

Suddenly he felt himself raised to the atmosphere of a different world. Peace entered his unquiet heart. In faith, in hope, he committed his future with all its possibilities to the Lord. Pondering, he gazed upon the rolling waves, then upon the book which he held in his hand. The words which he had read were dictated by the Maker of this great and mighty sea, whose "Thus saith the Lord," would give to his sin-sick soul that strength and life that the ocean would give to his worn physical frame. At this moment he remembered the verse that his grandfather had written in the old Bible. For a long time he had not thought of it. He now searched diligently until he found it: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." With loving kindness!—yes, he understood its meaning now.

Absorbed in thought, he was oblivious to approaching footsteps, when suddenly raising his eyes, he saw Herr Hohendorf and his wife standing before him.

Instinctively he sought to hide the book he held in his hand, a book but lightly esteemed by the world. Ashamed of the impulse, conscious that it alone was the anchor of his hope, his happiness, he felt sufficiently courageous to acknowledge it before the world, and rising, without embarrassment, held the book openly in his hand, while he exchanged greetings with his new friends.

"You have been reading," said Frau Hohendorf, "how grandly the Psalmist speaks of the great wide sea. Ernest," she continued, turning to her husband, "one should always carry a Bible about with them." This she said that the stranger might feel they were in full accord.

They now remarked upon the quiet of the beach, it being the dinner hour for the guests who took their meals at the table d'hôte. "But my wife and I," said Herr Hohendorf, "have concluded not to mingle with the crowd on the island, but for a while to live by ourselves and enjoy this glorious sea."

His wife inquired after Elizabeth, saying that the nurse had told her how delicate she was. "I cannot tell you how greatly she has interested me from the very first," added the warm-hearted woman. After promising to call soon, they courteously withdrew.

The young officer returned to the cottage, he found Elizabeth still reclining upon the sofa, but awake. Her heart fluttered painfully as her husband took a seat by her side.

"Elizabeth," he began hesitatingly, "are you willing, for a time at least, that we shall live together after God's command?"

He paused, as his wife sat with downcast eyes.

"But if you wish to return and be with your own family," he resumed, "I will not oblige you to remain, though we came hither for a purpose, and in the hope of an entire restoration to your former health and vigor."

As he was speaking, his eyes fell upon a vase in which were the Braunhausen roses, fresh and fragrant. "These flowers we will accept as a confirmation of your wish, Elizabeth," he said, with a smile that was pathetic in its sadness. His wife still remained silent. "And when we return," he continued, with an effort, "you and the children shall go at once, as arranged, to Woltheim to your grandparents. While here you shall be perfectly free to consult your health and peace of mind."

She listened in silence. After another pause, he said, quickly, "Elizabeth, will you not speak to me?"

"I thank you," was all she said, upon which he left the room.

"He says this through a sense of generosity," she bitterly thought. "It is no deprivation to him to be relieved of my society. His decision is doubtless wise and right."

Rising from the sofa, she thought, "I will follow his advice, and be in the air as much as possible." Going to the mirror, she brushed her disordered curls from her fair brow. At this moment Johanna entered the room, bearing the new hat and wrap. Elizabeth looked at them in surprise.

"Now, gracious lady, you must dress," said the old nurse, who was a privileged character in the household. "All of the distinguished guests have gone to walk upon the beach."

"Where did these things come from?" inquired Elizabeth, in a choking voice.

"The gracious master himself purchased them in Bremen."

Taking the articles from the maid, she placed them in the wardrobe, and said quietly but decidedly, "I do not intend to walk upon the beach: I will stay with the children."

Elizabeth remained seated on the cottage porch during the entire evening; the sail cloth awning effectually screened her from the passers-by, yet did not shut out her view of the ocean. She ate supper alone with the children, and alone she sat by the cottage door, until the sun, like a great ball of fire, sank into the dark blue waters. Reverently and with folded hands she gazed upon the glorious prospect before her. Her heart was at peace. She had read blessed words in God's Book. Since her husband had spoken to her, all heaviness had departed. The Lord had heard her cry, and answered her prayer far beyond her expectation. The days spent in this tranquil island could not be void of all pleasure. She would not try to look into the future, but would accept gratefully day by day whatever the dear God would appoint.

When the sun had gone down and only a golden glow shimmered upon the face of the waters, her husband suddenly advanced toward her.

Involuntarily she arose.

"Do not let me disturb you, Elizabeth," he said, as he slowly and sadly turned away.

"Do not go," she returned quickly, "the sunset is so beautiful!"

He remained standing some few paces from her, leaning against the cottage wall. Together they gazed upon the glow that bathed sky and ocean in a flood of glory. At length only a meteor-like flash gleamed upon the silver foam of the rising waves; this also disappeared, and a deep, lurid, color fell over the darkening, shadowy sea, whose boundless arms encircled the little island in its awful embrace.

"It is getting cold," said Herr von Kadden, breaking the silence that had fallen upon them; "you had better go within, Elizabeth."

Scarcely were the words uttered, when she gathered together her wraps and went into the cottage, a servant following with a light. Opening her book of devotion, she read for a short time until her husband entered the room. Rising, she said, "Good night. He did not extend his hand as usual, but she was satisfied.

She lay awake for a long time, listening to the endless roar of the ever-rising waves as they broke upon the beach. She shuddered as she thought of the infinite extent of water that surrounded the little island; but the great God held these waters in the hollow of His hand, and He was her Father. Then with a sob she murmured that she was not isolated from all human sympathy, for she felt assured with all the strength of her being that she could rely upon her husband's protecting care.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ELIZABETH resolved to portion out her time with some degree of system and regularity. By the advice of her physician, her daily bath must be begun at once. The interval she would spend in the open air as much as possible. Collecting the various articles she intended to use during the day, she carried them outside of the cottage, and depositing them upon a little table which stood there, she seated herself upon a bench under the awning.

Elizabeth had been sewing diligently for some time when she heard voices: looking up, she saw her husband conducting Frau Hohendorf toward her retreat. She had not calculated upon any such disturbance of her plans, and felt somewhat annoyed. After the usual greetings, her visitor, noticing her preparations for work, remarked considerably that she did not intend to remain long, as she feared that by so doing she might disarrange her plans for the day. Elizabeth's warm nature could not resist the sympathetic look in the confiding brown eyes, and accordingly she invited her visitor to remain. Kadden meanwhile excused himself and withdrew to join Frau Hohendorf's husband, who was about to take a walk.

The visitor's observant eyes rested for a time upon the sewing and sketching materials which

Elizabeth in her zeal had gathered about her, and, finally said in a kind, motherly way, "Would not it be better for you, Frau Kadden, to abandon all kinds of work while on the island, and give your nerves a good rest?"

"Oh, no," returned Elizabeth, quickly; "idleness would not have as soothing an effect upon my nerves as employment."

The kindly eyes of the visitor rested compassionately upon the refined, sad face by her side; the warm-hearted woman was penetrated by an almost irresistible desire to throw her arms around her, and beg her to confide to her the grief that was evidently consuming her. Their slight acquaintance, however, would not warrant such familiarity. Controlling herself with an effort, Frau Hohendorf rose and bade her a somewhat hurried but kindly adieu.

"She seems to be very happy," thought Elizabeth, with a sigh, as she gazed after the retreating form, and for a few moments the humiliating consciousness of her husband's conduct toward her in Bremen overcame her.

Eight days had now passed quickly by, and although necessarily monotonous, had been rich in many varied occupations and experiences. Each day Elizabeth took her prescribed bath, and each day she was able to go, for a short time at least, to walk upon the beach. Occasionally she wandered alone to the neighboring heights, from which she watched with fascinated interest the breaking of the

tide at its base, or the long waves as they rolled shoreward with endless, unwearied movement. At times, accompanied by her little son, she gathered muscles upon the shore. She was free to do just as she pleased; her husband, who occupied himself with reading or writing or walking upon the beach, she saw only at table. It seemed strange and unnatural to Elizabeth to see her husband, whom she so tenderly loved, sitting opposite her without one kind word, without one loving look. At times she felt that she could not much longer bear her weight of woe, and then arose the evil thoughts which still more disturbed her troubled heart: "He has committed an unpardonable offence against you; he has destroyed your hope, he has spoiled your bright young life; it were better for you to renounce all love for him." But these thoughts were followed by bitter repentance, and she had no rest till, with weak and desolate heart, she laid her burden at the feet of Him who, when He sojourned on earth, said to such as she, "Come unto me all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

It was an exceptionally beautiful afternoon: Elizabeth sat alone upon her usual seat at the gable end of the cottage. All had been moving along quietly without much to chronicle, except the usual monotonous round of life upon the island; the voices of the children as they frolicked on the beach reached her ear at intervals. She was not aware whether her husband had gone out or was

still in his room. Rousing herself at length, she resolved to finish a painting that she had begun some few days ago; little was needed for its completion. Removing the sheet of paper from her folio, which lay upon a table before her, she gazed thoughtfully and critically upon her work. Yes, there were the Braunhausen roses faithfully copied. Their clear warm color seemed to glow almost with the "vividness and exquisiteness of nature's finish," while the real flowers stood withered before her. With a pang, she scarce knew why, she thought *her* hands alone should throw them into the sea. She derived both comfort and hope from the reflection that the roses lived again—only a few strokes of her brush were necessary to complete the painting. Her husband stood by the window overlooking her retreat, and caught a glimpse of the work, which hitherto she had successfully concealed from his notice, when he had inadvertently approached her table. He was wearied and could no longer remain in his room. Elizabeth had not observed his approach, but suddenly raising her eyes, she saw him standing before her. Hastily she covered up her now finished picture.

"Can I not look upon your handiwork?" he gently but reproachfully inquired.

A shadow of embarrassment and fright came over her countenance at the question. Unhesitatingly, however, she at once removed the covering. As she did so her face flushed painfully; and the tears came into her eyes. She was afraid her hus-

band might remember the hope that she had expressed with reference to the flowers, and would think that she had been behaving childishly by attaching so much importance to the life of the roses.

Seating himself by her side, he took the painting in his hand, and said in genuine admiration, "How skillfully, how accurately you have transferred these flowers to your paper, Elizabeth! they bloom anew in their original freshness and beauty."

"They are a remembrance of Braunhausen," she said simply.

He looked at her keenly. No, the meaning that he had fancied to be hidden in her words was not to be found in the clear, candid eyes: she had only been embarrassed by his coming.

"I see," said he as he noticed some faint strokes of her pencil, "that it is your intention to inscribe something underneath these flowers."

That was an unfortunate remark. How could she meet it? Answer it she must, or he might misinterpret her silence. As she saw that he did not intend to repeat his remark, she arose, and taking from the portfolio a slip of paper, upon which had been traced some words, handed it to him. He read, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness; *who against hope, believed in hope.*"

Kadden wrote the Latin characters in an unsteady hand, but he forced himself to the work. Soon the words were indelibly inscribed beneath the Braunhausen roses.

“Shall I apologize to him for my childishness,” she thought, “for imagining that in the life of these flowers a promise to me lies hidden? However, the words may seem only enigmatical to him, and it will not be necessary for me to speak.”

After the touching inscription had been written, her husband handed her the paper, and with a strange quivering of his features, silently withdrew.

CHAPTER XXVII.

UPON the following morning, Elizabeth wandered to the height that lay nearest to the cottage. She had not been there long, when Johanna, driven from the beach by the tide, brought the children to where she was seated. Almost simultaneously her husband made his appearance, accompanied by Herr Hohendorf, his wife, and three strange gentlemen. These latter were duly presented to Elizabeth. Herr von Bühlen, a fine-looking man, was the proprietor of an estate in Westfalen; the second, a theological student, and the third the pastor of the church in von Hohendorf's village. The latter had arrived by the boat that had last reached the island.

"It is perfectly clear to me now," said Herr Bühlen, with a bow, turning to Elizabeth, "why you so rigidly adhere to taking your prescribed rest upon this height. You could not have selected a more desirable location for your summer sojourn than where your cottage stands. We, on the contrary, lodge in the lowlands," he added, "and although not so desirable, yet we accomplish the object of our journey hither, and get the full benefit of the sea and sea-breeze."

"The sunsets must be magnificent from this point," said the pastor, speaking to Elizabeth.

"They are a never-ceasing source of pleasure to me," she responded, her sad face lighting up with child-like enthusiasm.

Herr Bühlen involuntarily directed a quick glance toward her. Raising her little son to her lap, she confusedly stroked the fair curls from his brow, hoping thereby to escape any further scrutiny.

At this opportune moment her husband approached, and bending down to her, said, in a low tone, "Can we not invite these gentlemen to take tea with us, Elizabeth?"

"If you wish it," was her quick response.

"If it will not discommode you," he returned.

"On the contrary, it will give me pleasure," she replied; and when her husband extended the invitation, Elizabeth gathered courage and, with housewifely dignity, added her cordial request that they would remain and partake of the evening meal with them.

Without hesitation they accepted the hospitable invitation. Herr Bühlen, taking Elizabeth's hand in his, said warmly, "I know not how it is, my dear young Frau; but your face is so familiar to me that I feel as though I had been long acquainted with you."

Elizabeth, well pleased, raised her beautiful eyes to his face, and with a lovely smile responded, "Doubtless you recognize a likeness to my grandfather, Herr Budmar." Tears rushed into her eyes the while in spite of her smile, and fearful of be-

traying any further weakness she hastily excused herself and withdrew, ostensibly to order the supper. Every eye followed the retreating form of the beautiful, fragile woman with sympathizing interest, then instinctively rested upon her husband, who with grave, set countenance gazed abstractedly out over the broad sea.

Elizabeth entered the cottage upon "hospitable thoughts intent," while Johanna and the landlady stood ready to render her all needful assistance. Taking the little Marie from the nurse's arms, she walked with her to the window and looked thoughtfully out upon the green hills with their scattered, picturesque cottages. This preparation afforded her pleasure. Her happiness now, she reflected, was to be made up of a faithful performance of duty. A diligent and gentle housekeeper, a faithful and loving mother, may perchance be happy although the sun may not shine nor the flowers bloom upon her path. At this moment the sweet notes of the bugle were heard in the distance. The familiar sound still had power to send a thrill through her being. The quiet verdant hills, the deep blue sky, the distant strains of music, whose sweet vibrations quivered through the air, gave her a sense of homesickness for the days that were past, for the happy days that would never return. "Dear Lord," she breathed, "let me henceforth cling to thy love alone. I would willingly, yes gladly, suffer unkindness, neglect and humiliation, as an offering to Thee and for Thy dear sake."

Hearing footsteps, she hurriedly wiped her eyes, and turning from the window encountered the sympathizing glance of Frau Hohendorf, who had come to seek her. The nurse now took little Marie from her mistress' arms, and Elizabeth and her new friend joined the cheerful group who seated themselves around the inviting table, which Johanna had set in the open air, where they could enjoy the refreshing breeze and look upon the glories of the setting sun until it sank into the dark blue flood. The guests meanwhile sat reverently expectant. "Will my husband offer an audible blessing?" thought Elizabeth, anxiously. Yes, for the first time in his life Herr Kadden assumed the duty of a true head of the house, and openly thanked the dear God, the Giver of all good.

Elizabeth enjoyed the society of her guests, and yet felt relieved when they bade her adieu and she was again alone. How still, how profoundly still the evening was. The moon was new; as a light golden boat it seemed to float in the blue expanse of ether, high over the massive masonry of the lighthouse. The rising flood rolled gently shoreward with a soft, monotonous cadence "like the pulsing of great ocean's heart."

This had been an eventful day. The companionship of the children of God had been a pleasure to her. This was no light blessing, and would ever be available, though henceforth she was not to experience that fullness of joy which is the heritage only of a happy heart.

Elizabeth was still too weak to mingle in the society of her friends; the effort was too great for her weakened nerves. The knowledge that her fragility, and sad, white face attracted special attention was painful to her. For a season at least she wished to be alone with her Lord; by Him alone to be comforted. When she prayed "Give us this day our daily bread," she added, "Lord, give me this day refreshment for my weary soul."

The cool night wind now came in gusts across the darkening waters. It brought ease to her fevered brow. The golden boat had descended to the very edge of the heights. Rising, she walked toward the cottage, now and again turning and gazing wistfully after the tall, dark, solitary figure that passed with measured tread up and down the beach.

Johanna advanced solicitously to meet her mistress, who soon after entered the cottage. "Shall I retire before he comes," she thought, "or had I better wait to say good night?" These "good nights" were the oases in the dreary desert of her life, the one glow which remained out of the full sunshine that formerly brightened her way, the one unwithered blossom out of the flower-strewn path of the past. It was long after the accustomed hour of her husband's return. Should she give up this one faint gleam of happiness because he had forgotten or was indifferent about it?

Her heart cried out, "No, no, I must treasure with a miser's care the little that is left to me, and

must be more saving with it than I was with my abundance. But should he remain out much longer, what then?" Opening her little book of devotion, she read the verses for the day: "Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." "Yes, faithful in that which is least," she repeated; "pride shall not make me poor. I will wait here until he comes, and say good night."

Her thoughts now wandered to the legends she had heard of her grand-aunt Elizabeth, after whom she was named. Her grandmother had told her that *her* husband was rough and inconsiderate toward her, but that she was ever patient, gentle and faithful in the performance of every duty. This picture out of the past had always hitherto affected Elizabeth unpleasantly. Her whole being rose up in rebellion against it. It was humiliating, she had thought, a relic of barbarism, for a wife to say, "He shall be thy lord." Elizabeth gazed thoughtfully upon her wedding ring. "Are these the words of God? If so, I will be patient and forgiving like my old aunt Elizabeth." She sat motionless, waiting for the longed-for step. At last she heard her husband approach the cottage door. "Perhaps he may be angry at finding me still here," she thought.

Noiselessly he opened the door, for he did not doubt that his wife had retired. "You still up, Elizabeth?" he said, anxiously.

"I will go now," she said, rising quietly and bidding him good night.

"You did not remain up on my account?" he asked, hastily.

Hesitating a moment, she answered, "I wanted to bid you good night, Otto."

He quickly extended his hand, but suppressed the words that rushed to his lips.

And now followed some lovely, tranquil days; one after the other glided peacefully away. Elizabeth had recovered sufficiently to enable her to walk quite a distance. She frequently paced up and down the beach when the island-guests were at dinner. Her friends had soon arrived at the conclusion that it was decidedly the wiser course not to disturb her, but to suffer her to do as she pleased, knowing full well that she needed rest and quiet above all else to restore her exhausted energies. If they met her, as occasionally they did, they would stop to speak for but a moment in passing, and then permitted her to continue her walk alone. That the sea baths and her regular quiet life were having a salutary affect upon her, there was no longer any doubt.

Another week had elapsed, when one morning as Herr Bühlen was passing, he spoke as usual to Elizabeth, then lingering hesitatingly some few moments, said: "I have a favor to ask of you,

Frau Kadden. Some of my special friends are to be my guests in the public garden this afternoon, and as there is to be a coffee party in a different part of the island, we shall be undisturbed. It would give me very great pleasure if you would accompany Herr Kadden."

Elizabeth promised that she would deliver the message upon her husband's return from his bath, and that she would herself consider the invitation, and if possible accept. She had but just gone into the children's room when Frau Hohendorf made her appearance. In the course of conversation, she alluded to the company, but purposely abstained from using any persuasion. Elizabeth really felt a desire to go, but she was conscious that she would not be presentable in her old hat and wrap; although good enough for the purpose for which she had hitherto used them, they would be unsuitable in the public garden, and to wear the new articles of apparel was not to be thought of. "It is much better," she said, "that I should stay with the children." While she was still speaking, to her consternation, Johanna entered the apartment, bearing the new hat and wrap.

"You see, Gracious Lady," she began, glancing at Frau Hohendorf, with a conscious smile, "that we too have some tasteful articles of dress, although we have not hitherto had a disposition to wear them. I thought I would air these beautiful things, if only for this one occasion."

"Put them away, Johanna," said her mistress, peremptorily, "I am not going out to-day."

"But it is wrong of our Gracious Lady to say that," continued the old nurse persistently, gathering courage from the presence of the visitor. "My master himself selected them while we were in Bremen, and he has not seen them since the day they were purchased."

Elizabeth's face meanwhile had flushed painfully. "They are too good to wear upon the beach," she said in excuse, turning with conscious embarrassment to Frau Hohendorf.

Her guest was fully convinced by her manner that Elizabeth's objection to wearing the articles under discussion was owing to her husband's having selected them. Therefore she said kindly, but remonstrantly, "Pardon me, my dear friend, but suffer me to suggest that you make a beginning and wear them this afternoon."

Elizabeth felt greatly annoyed, and was inwardly struggling with her rebellious spirit. Doubtless her guest attributed her present conduct to obstinacy. Her husband also, she reflected, should she conclude to go, might misinterpret her motives. But the dear Lord knew that for her to array herself in these unfortunate garments, would be only an additional humiliation. The thought that the Lord knew removed all her objections, and she inwardly vowed, "I will make my pride an offering to Him. I will not trouble myself about petty misapprehension of motives." "I will go," she said.

After dinner was over; for the first since she had

been upon the island, Elizabeth made a special toilette. Johanna was very happy and busy over it, and when she had given the last finishing touches she walked backward and stood admiringly before her mistress. She felt that her work had been satisfactorily accomplished, for her Dear Lady looked as fresh and as charming as when she was a maiden. The toilette had been made in the children's room. Going quietly into the adjoining apartment to procure the wrap, and as a crowning glory the tasteful new hat from the wardrobe, she found her master as usual poring over his newspaper.

An old servant is a privileged character, and Johanna, taking full advantage of her prerogative, said in a low tone, "We have at last persuaded the Gracious Lady to wear these tasteful articles of dress that the Master bought in Bremen. My lady promised Frau Hohendorf, when she was here this morning, that she would go."

Kadden looked up quickly, his features quivering painfully. When he had sufficiently mastered himself, he said peremptorily, "Let them be, Johanna; my wife will put them on in this room."

"Yes, certainly," returned Johanna, most innocently, "the mirror is much better here;" and laying the articles of apparel upon the sofa, she withdrew, well pleased with the result of her diplomacy.

Kadden rose, walked irresolutely to the door of the adjoining apartment, then back again, and

finally crossed the room, and knocking at the partly closed door, asked quietly, "Elizabeth, are you ready?"

"I am ready," she responded quickly. After spending some little time in searching for her handkerchief and gloves, her mind agitated by conflicting emotions, she tremblingly entered the room. Her thin, transparent hands were convulsively clasped and pressed to her bosom. Timidly; yes instinctively shrinking, the wife looked upon her husband, who with sad, gloomy countenance, stood before her.

"Oh! Elizabeth," he cried, stricken with grief at seeing her involuntarily recoil from him, heedless of the betrayal of his anguish. "How can you fear me? Have I committed an unpardonable offence?" Throwing himself upon the lounge in utter abandonment of grief, he covered his face with his hands and sobbed aloud.

Elizabeth knew not what to do to soothe this unwonted agitation. She was frightened, but not as she had been before. Moving to his side she said gently, with trembling voice, "I feared that you were angry with me, Otto."

"Elizabeth," he cried impetuously, "have pity upon me and tell me without reserve of what you are thinking. I will not compel you to answer," he continued, "but I implore you to speak without restraint."

"I thought," began Elizabeth, in a choking voice, forcing herself to utterance, "if you were angry that I would be mild and gentle."

He gazed upon her with a searching look and waited for her to proceed. Submissively she continued, "I resolved that I would patiently endure whatever you saw fit to say or to do, for the love I bear to the dear God—and as an offering to Him"—again she hesitated, and again forced herself to go on, "because you, my husband, are by His command, my lord."

"I will *not* be your lord," he exclaimed passionately, biting his lips in his agitation.

Elizabeth looked at him in an agony of doubt.

"Have you not been satisfied with me during these last three long weeks?" he said gloomily.

"I thank you," she returned warmly, "and forgive me if I have unintentionally made a mistake I did not mean to add to my error."

"Can you ever feel confidence in me again, Elizabeth?" he sadly asked. "I ask nothing more from you," he continued, as she still remained silent, "than that you release me from the torment I endure when we are with strangers. You shrink as though you were terrified at the very sight of me."

"I will try to do all that you wish," she answered timidly.

"I know that you desire to do what is right, but the past is past," he said, sadly.

The painful silence was at length broken by the voices of Paul and Anna. Elizabeth hastily arose and wiped away her tears, while her husband advanced to the door. The children informed him

that their parents had gone to the park, and there awaited their coming.

Elizabeth lifted up the new hat and hastily and nervously placed it on her head, without approaching the mirror. The young officer laid the wrap over her shoulders and they left the room. Observing her husband, she saw him draw his hand over his forehead.

"Have you a headache, Otto," she asked solicitously.

"The symptoms of one," he answered.

"I saw that to-day," she continued.

"Was I irritable?" he asked quickly.

"No, I saw it in your eyes."

It was a comforting thought to him: "She still notices the expression of my eyes."

Elizabeth, compelling herself to talk, spoke of their stay on the island, and the beneficial effect of the sea air upon his headaches, adding cheerfully that as for herself, she had almost regained her former health and vigor.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

DAY after day glided quickly by, and in passing brought the time of departure nearer and nearer. Elizabeth contemplated it with mingled emotions. The isolated, regular life which she had been leading was refreshing to her exhausted energies and strengthening to her shattered nerves; but it must come to an end. How would it be with her when compelled to take up the scattered threads of her old life, meeting daily with relative and acquaintance as of old? How was it possible for her so to order her future life as to be different from that which she had so gladly laid aside? Intercourse with her new friends had been pleasant, instructive and agreeable. She would leave them with regret, for she had learned to love them. Contact with the painful past and all its unpleasantness could be much more readily and naturally avoided when one lived but for the present. Opportunities for remembrance and for spiritual conflict did not fail even in this quiet island home.

The past few days had brought with them renewed discomfort; for the continuous storm of wind and rain had driven her from the open air and forced her to take refuge within doors.

Upon the first inclement morning she had removed her work into the children's apartment,

which was much lighter than the family room; the thought that perchance her constant presence might be burdensome to her husband, was reason sufficient for not inflicting her society upon him. She remembered that he had formed the habit of staying in his own room at Braunhausen, and during the past year she had gradually given up the custom of spending her leisure hours with him. Her absence would therefore not be noticed by him, or if so, she sadly reflected, it would at least not add to his discomfort. But when, after the usual morning bath and the time spent upon the beach, her husband found her comfortably ensconced in the children's room, preparations for her various occupations gathered about her, he looked gravely and inquiringly at her, and withdrew without remark. In the afternoon, when a spirit of restlessness drove her into the adjoining apartment, she found it empty.

The following morning was still gray and stormy. The resident physician had prohibited her morning bath, consequently her time was more than ever at her own disposal. Taking advantage of her husband's absence, Elizabeth removed her sewing basket and books from the children's apartment and arranged them in the living-room. "Come what may," she reflected, "my conscience shall be clear."

Kadden did not return until noon. Elizabeth listened with some anxiety for his step. When he entered the room she gave him a prompt good

morning. Making no remark at her change of location, he greeted her pleasantly, and taking a seat near her, described in an entertaining manner the long walk he had taken that morning, adding that he had never beheld a more sublime prospect than that of the tempestuous ocean, as seen from the heights. Elizabeth longed to witness it and urged her husband to accompany her. He consented, and, after dinner, when the storm had somewhat abated, they started for the headland.

The wind had somewhat subsided, but fierce gusts still drove dense masses of cloud through the sky. Reaching their destination with some difficulty, they gazed with a feeling of breathless awe upon the wildly raging-waste of waters. Billow after billow, crowned with white and fleecy foam, rolled threateningly up to the very foot of the height upon which they stood. The roar of the waves as they dashed with rage upon the beach, the screeching of the storm-birds as they flew wheeling around, was truly an overwhelming spectacle. The pitiless sea seemed as though it would swallow up the little island. Wave after wave, lashed to relentless fury, beat upon it, the receding billows thundering back only to be precipitated with increased rage in a mass of foaming, tumbling breakers. A feeling of uncontrollable fear overwhelmed Elizabeth as she gazed with awe-stricken fascination upon the unrestrained war of waters. The scene was calculated only to aggravate her nervous dejection. She thought of the

wreck of her hopes, of her lost "love venture." Her future rose up before her, gray and unquiet as this dark, uneasy sea. But a ray of comfort lightened the darkness that environed her, as she thought of "the Christ who stilled the waves on the Sea of Galilee," and humbly she prayed that He would calm the tumult of her heart.

After dinner Elizabeth sat sewing diligently, while her husband read aloud to her. Their quiet was broken in upon by the sudden loud clang of the bell which ordinarily summoned the guests to their bath. Kadden, throwing down his book, hurriedly left the cottage to inquire into the meaning of the summons at this unusual hour. He encountered the landlady, on her way to apprise them that the bell had been rung to draw the attention of the guests to "the sea of fire." Storm, full tide, and a sea of fire! Who could resist this wonderful combination? Elizabeth's enthusiastic nature could not; and again urging her husband to allow her to accompany him, they set out at once for the nearest headland. Simultaneously with their appearance, hurrying crowds streamed from out the numerous scattered cottages. Among the many groups who were hastening their way to the same point as themselves, were Herr Hohendorf and his wife, the pastor, Madame Brandes, whose acquaintance they had recently made, and her beautiful daughter.

The shore was literally alive with dark, muffled forms. Exclamations of astonishment, of rapture

and of awe, were heard upon every side. With a sense of overpowering dread, Elizabeth's fascinated gaze was riveted upon the prospect before her. The air resounded with the roar of the raging billows, which heaved and swelled, each thundering, seething, breaking wave wearing a coronet of fire, and each in endless succession scattering its millions of scintillations of glowing spray broad-cast over the unfathomed, boundless waste of waters.

At some distance from the coast, where once lay the beach, a high ridge had been formed. Here even in a comparatively quiet sea the breakers raged and tossed; and now, lashed into fury by the storm, great sheets of tumbling, tossing foam plunged in an unceasing fiery torrent, an ever-changing, horrible Inferno, into the awful sea of liquid fire. Elizabeth was too frightened to appreciate the splendor of the scene. Frau Hohendorf, on the contrary, stood at her side overcome by this sublime, glorious manifestation of the power of Almighty God. He was *her* God, and she knew no fear; the sea also was His servant. Elizabeth felt as if she were wandering in the mazes of an evil dream: it seemed indelibly impressed upon her mind that this fear-inspiring spectacle was the symbol of her uneasy heart. Shudderingly she gazed upon the fervid, flashing depths of ocean, and then up at the dark, fast-moving masses of cloud, as the fierce gusts of wind sent them across the leaden sky. After looking long and intently, Frau Hohendorf suggested that they should climb

to the summit of the highest mound, that lay some considerable distance from the elevation upon which they then were, as from thence they would have a still more extended view of this wonder, which in all probability they would never have another opportunity of witnessing. No one expected or even proposed that Elizabeth should accompany them. Frau Hohendorf was sorry to leave her, but refrained from urging her to go along. All of the party eagerly agreed to the suggestion, leaving at once the grassy mound. Kadden accompanied Madame Brandes' beautiful young daughter. As he departed he bade his wife good night and solicitously advised her to go immediately to the cottage, as the wind was increasing in violence and she would be liable to take cold. Elizabeth stood riveted to the spot, her great, sad eyes following their dark forms until they vanished behind the light-house, which, as the black clouds were momentarily rent, "started into life, a dim, gigantic shape, holding its lantern o'er the restless surge." When the spectators who were in the immediate neighborhood had left, she stood alone upon the height as in a dream. Her whole life passed in review before her, as child, as maiden, as wife. Had she been faithful in these several relations of life? Conscience rose up and accused her. Vainly she sought to excuse herself. "Again and again she told herself that she was wronged. Again and again the might of a shadowy and unacknowledged truth put her to silence." Buried

in deep thought, she took no note of time, and was only aroused by voices coming toward her from the distance. She hastened to the house. Scarcely had she thrown aside her wraps, when her husband, with quick step, approached the cottage, and soon after entered the room. She hastily resolved that she would hide from him the shame of her groundless jealousy.

"Did you remain outside until just now, Elizabeth?" he anxiously asked, observing her drooping head and frightened manner.

"I could not go in," was the scarce audible answer; and the sweet, sad face flushed painfully.

"Did you enjoy the magnificent display?" he continued, looking at her closely the while.

The drooping head only inclined in answer; then looking hurriedly up at her husband as he stood before her, she whispered timidly, "Good night."

But he would not have her leave him thus, but approached still nearer. "Elizabeth, look at me." She raised her lovely liquid eyes with the submission of a conquered child, and her husband, with a thrill of joy which he with difficulty restrained, said tenderly, "What is it, Elizabeth?"

"It was so lonely," she sobbed.

"Did you wish me to stay with you?" he asked, with a strange tremor in his voice.

"Ah! yes," she answered with a deep, long sigh, as with an effort she suppressed the rising tears.

His heart gave a quick throb of joy. Taking

her hand in both of his, he said, "Had I known that, I would not have gone."

Elizabeth stood as one entranced, then with a sob she said, "Forgive me, Otto," and bade him a loving good-night.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE sky was again blue, the August sun shining upon the sea, and the white, fleecy waters flashed back its brilliant light in millions of iridescent rays. Storm and cloud had passed ; the sea was still tossed, but no longer wildly. Elizabeth was gaining daily in health and spirits, and continued to follow rigidly her physician's advice. She was now able to take long walks with her new friends.

The ladies apparently found plenty of entertainment in their varied occupations, while the gentlemen, on the contrary, now that the time of departure drew near, became daily more and more restless, longing to be at their homes, engaged in their various avocations. Accordingly they planned a sea voyage to Spiekeroge, the nearest inhabited island. Kadden was asked to make one of the party, and accepted the invitation. Elizabeth felt relieved at the prospect of her husband's departure. She had been leading a life of restraint, and was conscious that every look and action came under his scrutiny. She hoped that for a few days, at least, she might feel free and happy as in the innocent days of her girlhood. Her clear, candid eyes could not conceal the feeling, though she thought her husband did not suspect it; his mind appeared

to be preoccupied with the prospect of the voyage. He bade her a constrained adieu, and was graver and sterner than usual. It is a common mistake for those who wish to conceal their feelings, to imagine that silence proves the secret is undiscovered.

Elizabeth did not enjoy her liberty as much as she had expected. After the boat had left the island, and the monotonous round of sea-side occupations gone through with, her depression increased rather than diminished. The thought of her husband's return, comforted her as she wandered restlessly to the opposite side of the cottage, from whence she could see the ocean, and catch a faint, misty view of the little isle of Spiekeroge.

Twilight was deepening, her children were sleeping. Elizabeth still sat upon the grassy height and looked thoughtfully out over the sea, darkening shadows casting an impressive, solemn stillness over the scene. In the north stood a high bank of gray cloud. She had drawn the attention of her landlady to it, and had received the comforting answer, "The wind is from the south and it will not storm." Evening slowly deepened into night; the wind was momentarily rising, and now blew in cold gusts from the sea. Elizabeth wended her solitary way to the cottage, and soon after retired to rest.

She awoke in the midst of the night and the darkness to hear the ocean roaring and the wind howling. "It is storming," she exclaimed, spring-

ing out of bed, and throwing a large shawl around her went into the children's room, causing Johanna to fear something serious was the matter. Her mistress said in a low voice, "The sea is roaring loudly; I must go outside and see if it is storming." "It is only the tide," said the old nurse reassuringly. "The gentlemen would not venture upon the sea in a storm; give yourself no anxiety upon that account, my lady." This assurance was no comfort to Elizabeth, as she knew they expected to start back at midnight. Some of the party were anticipating the pleasure of a seal hunt the following day. They were; perhaps, in that little boat in the midst of an angry sea. She left the room, accompanied by Johanna. Opening the cottage door, she looked eagerly out. It was clear starlight. The waves beat foaming against the height; a brisk wind was blowing from the south. In the east a faint streak of light proclaimed the coming dawn, but storm there was none. Elizabeth entered the cottage with a grateful heart, kissed her sleeping children, and again lay down in peace and slept.

In the morning, after her bath and stroll upon the beach, she returned to the house, accompanied by Paul and Anna. The rest of the day was spent in amusing her little ones. She was so absorbed that she did not hear her husband's step as he approached the cottage. Not finding Elizabeth or the children in their rooms, he went to the window; looking out, he saw the group of happy little ones.

In their midst, as happy and as child-like as they, sat his wife Elizabeth. Her look reminded him of the day when he had listened amusedly to her discussion with the old groom about Ypsilanti at the railway station in Braunhausen. He forgot his vexation and went into the garden; there he stood some little while before his presence was discovered. Frederick was the first to see his father, and ran shouting toward him. Elizabeth rose quickly, but lingered a moment until she had recovered her composure.

Kadden did not remain long, but joined the party of gentlemen who were starting for a walk. Elizabeth soon after retired to the bench beneath the awning. Holding her needle-work in her hand, she did not sew. Her thoughts were busy: in four days they would be homeward bound—how would it be then?

Her husband did not return, and Elizabeth ate the evening meal alone with her children. She informed Johanna that the gentlemen had returned, but that they felt the necessity of a walk to compensate them for their disagreeable sea-voyage.

She put her children to sleep as usual, then wended her solitary way to the height. In the north, as yesterday, was piled a high bank of gray cloud. Her proud spirit disdained to admit, even to herself, what foolish hopes she had entertained about her husband's return, or how much she had suffered from his cold farewell and abrupt departure. She took herself gravely to task. He should

not know that she had expected of him aught save that she had received. Indignation, shame and sorrow arose in her heart by turns. She would try henceforth to be more reasonable. She would school herself, she would conceal and conquer her variable moods, she would teach herself to be cold. To women of such nature, she reflected, life is much easier. A man is unable to understand an ardent heart. But there was neither strength nor comfort in the thought. "I cannot act by rule," she impulsively exclaimed, "my whole being would have to undergo a change. My husband has tried to be kind, but one cannot compel love. He himself said, 'What is past is past.' Yes, the past has become as nothing to him. To me it is simply my life, for I love him with my whole heart. I cannot do otherwise. Cold reason cannot help me."

Her eyes wandered expectantly towards the beach. The last solitary pedestrian had disappeared. She was now convinced that her husband had been prevailed upon to spend the evening in the company of his friends, and had forgotten all about the supper hour. Dejected and tired, she went back to the cottage. Her resolve to be cool and reasonable came to naught. The fabric which her reason had so skilfully constructed was shattered by one thought of all she had lost. Her enforced self-command deserted her, and laying her head upon the table, tears flowed fast and long without restraint. "No dear Lord, I cannot be in-

different, I am too weak; but I will offer up my weakness as an offering to Thee."

She heard the footstep of her husband, who paused before entering. "I hope you did not wait supper for me, Elizabeth," he said quickly, as he stepped over the threshold.

"Not long," was the gentle answer.

His conscience accused him. "I staid away," he began hesitatingly, "because I knew that my absence would not be displeasing to you."

She looked up quickly, and quickly down again.

He approached, and taking her hand in both of his, said with a tremor in his voice, "I thought you were glad, Elizabeth, when I went away."

"I thought so, too," was her blushing, ingenuous answer.

"Forgive me," he said, as he bade her a kindly good night.

The glad thought passed through her heart, "It is well that God has not made woman cool and philosophical. A meek and quiet spirit is in His sight of great price. Patience and love and humility are more blessed than all the reason and philosophy in the world."

CHAPTER XXX.

Two days afterwards Herr Hohendorf and his wife, accompanied by Madame Brandes and daughter, left Wangeroge. Herr Bühlen had taken his departure one week previous. The evenings were lengthening, and the island was becoming daily more and more lonely. Elizabeth felt an irresistible longing for home. Johanna also was growing restless, and only intensified her mistress' desire by continually talking of Woltheim, and of the pleasure her grandparents would feel in seeing how healthy and blooming her Lady had grown.

Upon the last afternoon of their stay, when all arrangements had been practically perfected for their departure, and her husband had gone to make some visits which he felt were obligatory, Elizabeth took her children for a walk upon the beach. After leaving the two little ones in the care of their faithful attendants, Johanna and Wilhelm, she wandered to the most distant of the headlands, to which Frau Hohendorf had taken her some days before. She had now the courage to venture alone, and desired to take a silent farewell of the island, and a review of the various experiences which had befallen her there. Ascending, she seated herself upon the summit. It was so solitary, so still, that at first the sense of loneliness was absolutely op-

pressive. The sun lay warm upon the masses of glittering sand, upon the thirsty herbage, and the scanty slender blades of grass. The sky was deeply, beautifully blue, the sea shimmered and sparkled, the surf shone like burnished silver. Elizabeth gazed meditatively out upon the broad expanse of ocean, her eye following with fascinated interest wave after wave as each rolled toward her, clear and fresh and glittering, until it broke in foaming surf upon the shining sand. Her spirit drank refreshment and repose from the cool unceasing flow. She took long, deep draughts of the invigorating air, each inhalation bringing new strength and energy. She sat with folded hands, listening to the roar of the breakers, while a lasting peace seemed to flow from this great sea into her heart. She looked up to the broad spreading canopy of heaven, so wondrously clear, so blue, so calm, an emblem of the grace, the truth, the love of the Eternal Father. She longed for the wings of the sea-gull, who upborne on silver pinions, soared heavenward, in the fresh, cool foam of the waves. Her heart was as light as the bird—how miserable she had been when she first came there! She would return invigorated in body, and tranquilized in spirit. She was no longer tormented by anger and humiliation. God's love inspired her, and naturally brought forth the fruit of the spirit: love, joy, peace that the world has neither power to give nor to take away. Even in the midst of misfortune we can be happy, was Elizabeth's

sweet experience. She looked hopefully into the unknown future. "All things were hers, for she was Christ's, and Christ was God's." She might encounter the surveillance of her relatives and the little world of Braunhausen, but her soul would unfold its pinions, and serene and poised as the seagull would soar straight heavenward, and bathe in the boundless, unfathomed sea of God's grace.

The most unpleasant part of the journey was over—the rising at midnight, the voyage, the transferring of the baggage. The little company of travelers at last reached the railway train. Elizabeth saw that her husband was suffering from one of his severe headaches; reclining as before in the corner of the seat, pale and with closed eyes. *Not as before* was our Elizabeth. Johanna was feeling the effects of the sea-voyage, and consequently was unable to undertake the care of the children. The mother alone was apparently fresh and well. She too was fatigued, but she thought little about it. She soothed little Marie, amused Frederick, and quietly drew the curtain so that her husband should not be annoyed by the sunshine. All this was done spontaneously, the outcome of an unselfish, quiet disposition.

Th's silent, unobtrusive attention did not pass unobserved. Her husband was soothed and comforted by it. His thoughts were busy, in spite of the pain he was suffering. That Elizabeth should go to Woltheim was a foregone conclusion, al-

though it was a bitter thought to him that any one should come between him and his wife. Dreamy visions of the possibility that she might perhaps prefer to return to Braunhausen with him were entertained by him, but the feasibility of this was problematical; he saw that she thought not of it, and his own judgment showed him the advisability of her going to her grandparents. He alone must encounter the curious scrutiny of society and the gossiping tongue of the world. The autumn manœuvres would soon come off, and he would leave his desolated home and all annoyances behind him. Sometimes he thought that he would ask his wife not to mention to the family the unhappy scene which, like an accusing angel, rose up out of the past and confronted him—the last act of a series of unkind acts, which had resulted in Elizabeth's partial estrangement, and her loss of confidence in him. But he refrained; he would not deprive her of the satisfaction of the disclosure, if she had any desire to speak.

That tongues were busy, and that reports were in circulation, he knew not. A resident of the adjoining neighborhood who had been in *Nordernei*, upon his return, had met with passengers direct from Wangeroge. They inquired of him about the singular young couple from Braunhausen, and in return told him about the rumors in circulation regarding them during their sojourn on the island. He in turn did not hesitate to communicate their report to others. The "world's wife" turned a

ready ear to the gossip, and by persistent repetition the story grew to marvellous proportions. Elizabeth's family was made acquainted with these rumors through the Oberförster, who thus far had preserved a strict neutrality. This gossip, viewed in the light of her few brief and unsatisfactory letters, was regarded as a confirmation of the same, and by her friends as a sequel to the story that had begun before their journey. This state of affairs unfortunately coincided with the views entertained, and the prophecies uttered, by the two kindred spirits, Emilie and Aunt Julchen, who thought it a waste of energy to fight against the inevitable, and judged that there was no way out of the trouble but by an absolute separation.

The Oberförsterin naturally took the part of her niece; for according to the exaggerated reports, the young officer had not only neglected his wife in Wangeroge, but had treated her with marked coldness.

Herr von Kadden's friends were also busy in pronouncing their prejudiced judgment. The *wife* was in fault. Her impracticable and fanatical views made her husband's life a perpetual martyrdom. Public opinion was therefore divided, and the arrival of the much-talked-of pair was looked forward to with interest and excitement.

The travelers rested as before at Hanover, and upon the following day arrived at the little station at Braunhausen. The coach, drawn by the sober grays, and driven by the old groom, was duly

awaiting them; also the beautiful brown steed expected his master. Kadden, to his great annoyance, saw his officious friend Stottenheim standing ready to greet them as they alighted from the coach, who, with his usual effusion, assured them that his personal interest and sympathy had constrained him to welcome them home. How much a weak and restless spirit of curiosity had contributed to this, he did not say.

Elizabeth naturally greeted him with some embarrassment, as he in flattering terms assured her that she was looking more blooming than ever. While Kadden was occupied with the baggage, Elizabeth, taking little Frederick by the hand, approached the horse, and caressingly stroked his glossy brown mane. Stottenheim gazed admiringly after the lovely child-like Frau. This action did not altogether correspond with his preconceived notions of things, but he bided his time. The parting restored his self-conceit. The young officer's abstracted manner did not escape him. After the arrangements were completed, Kadden mounted his horse, and without one word of farewell, flew past the carriage like an arrow from a bow. Calling to his friend not to ride so madly, Stottenheim spurred his horse, and soon caught up with him. Notwithstanding he longed for a confidential chat, he was aware that it would not answer to hasten; he must go discreetly to work. There was nothing to be won from Kadden by precipitation. He was therefore exceedingly ingenuous, and in a sprightly

way told of what had occurred in the garrison since his friend's departure, and the news of the day.

CHAPTER XXXI.

KADDEN found upon his return that every necessary preparation had been made for his reception. The reliable maid who had been left in charge of the house would for an indefinite period still continue to act as housekeeper; the groom would also be exclusively at his master's service. After partaking of his solitary dinner, the young officer sought to occupy himself with work that had accumulated during his enforced absence—but how strange all things seemed since he had last breathed the air of Braunhausen! The interval which had elapsed since his superficial friend Stottenheim had so persistently sought to draw him back to his old manner of life was like a dream. If he could only resolve to ride to Woltheim! But he hesitated at disturbing Elizabeth's first meeting with her relatives; he could not think but that his presence there would be intrusive. An inward shrinking, which he could scarcely define, possessed him when he thought of his last visit to Woltheim, and strengthened his resolve to remain at home.

Towards evening Stottenheim made his appearance, accompanied by several of his brother officers, who all cordially welcomed their comrade's return to the garrison. Controlling himself with an effort, he maintained an indifferent demeanor during their

visit. Upon leaving they insisted upon his accompanying them to the public garden. This was natural, as he had been accustomed during the early summer always to make one of their party. He could give no good reason why he should now decline their invitation. A walk would doubtless do him good after his long, tiresome journey. Accordingly he left the house with them, and was further prevailed upon during the course of the afternoon to join them in a game of nine-pins. "Kadden is a reasonable man," thought Stottenheim; "he will soon rally from this unfortunate complication."

It was twilight before they returned from their recreation. Most unexpectedly they met the Oberförster, who was driving that way. Not Stottenheim alone, but the other officers also, could not help remarking how unpleasant this encounter was to Kadden. Naturally Herr Schultz halted; greetings were exchanged, but neither could succeed in concealing his embarrassment at the meeting. The ever-ready Stottenheim accepted the situation, and answering for his friend, entered into a somewhat elaborate explanation of their visit to the garden, adding that the amusement had been entered into as a solace for his poor friend's lonely condition. Kadden was so provoked at his entering into details that he neglected to send greetings to his wife and children.

The following morning the young officer resumed his accustomed duties, and decided to make

the visit due to his colonel during the afternoon. Towards evening, if practicable, he would ride to Woltheim. The colonel's family, apprised through Stottenheim of the contemplated visit, were consequently in a state of the greatest excitement, particularly Adolfine, whose silly brain was again filled with foolish fancies. From the time that Kadden's marriage had been spoken of as a failure, she had been walking amid illusions. Her heart turned toward the attractive young man with more than ordinary interest and sympathy; moreover, he had been her first young love. That there was anything dishonorable, ungenerous or wrong in the indulgence of such feelings, never occurred to her for a moment. She was a spoiled child, wayward, vain and mentally undisciplined. She did not for an instant question his want of constancy: "His wife's position is the result of her own folly," she thought, "the blame is hers alone." With high hopes and glowing anticipations she felt assured that she was at last on the high-road to the attainment of the long desired goal; and when her father, who was not prepossessed in Elizabeth's favor, gave it as his opinion that the most reasonable course for Kadden to adopt would be to obtain an immediate divorce, the thought darted through her mind, "I would be a far more suitable wife for him than she." In elaborate toilette, with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes, she listened to Stottenheim's minute description of the arrival of the travelers, and of Kadden's stern demeanor.

He discussed confidentially with the ladies the outcome of this trouble, and in confirmation thereof related circumstantially Kadden's leave-taking from his young wife at the railway station, his manner in the garden, and lastly his inopportune meeting with the Oberförster, and his marked neglect in not sending one word of greeting to his wife and children, or any member of the family at Woltheim. "I for one," said he, "am firmly convinced that Kadden's heart is totally estranged from his wife, and that his sending her to her grandparents is only a pretext by which he may effect a speedy and unconditional separation."

"You truly believe that he wishes to procure a divorce?" inquired Adolfine excitedly.

"I see no other way out of the difficulty, much as I regret it," said Stottenheim, with a significant shrug of his shoulders.

"We will at least wish the poor fellow success," said the Colonel paternally. "I affirm, and my worldly experience confirms my assertion, that marriage between two persons of such marked individuality as Kadden and his wife, can never be happy. Frau Kadden is not only a woman of decided views, but she has been reared in the Pietistic school. Had she a husband who would let her singularities pass unnoticed, and quietly but firmly take his own course, her obstinacy, not meeting with opposition, would naturally drift into her husband's way of thinking. But I have long noticed that he too occasionally indulges in youth-

ful, Utopian dreams. He will now be reasonable, for he will see what fanaticism has done for him."

"I have often warned him of the danger of his course," began Stottenheim eagerly. "I have pointed out to him the sensible path, in contrast to the impassable road into which he was permitting himself to travel. I can assure you that the man was in a state of the greatest excitement over my advice. You will scarce think it credible, but he passionately assured me that the ideal views entertained by himself and his wife were not the cause of his troubles, but the miserable views entertained by the world and by society at large, and that he hoped to be able to withdraw his wife from the artificiality of its poisoned atmosphere. He also said that he would rather struggle his life long with his impetuosity and bluntness than that his wife should be one whit less sensitive. I finally tried to convince him that it was better for any man to marry a sensible woman, who could endure stoically, or philosophically at least, the storms that naturally arise in the firmament of every married life; for under such circumstances a man might be happier than with a woman whose sensitiveness was always on the *qui vive* to find some cause of offence."

"Naturally he could," said Adolfine promptly; then added, "if one's husband is out of tune, a woman should close her ears and amuse herself as well as she can during his ill-humor."

"But that method is not conformable to the

narrow-minded views entertained by the Pietists," said the Colonel, shaking his head deprecatingly, "and I greatly fear that Kadden has suffered himself to be so entangled by their surroundings, that it will require a desperate wrench to free himself when the time comes."

"Could you not talk with him?" said Adolfine briskly, turning towards Stottenheim. "You are his friend. You should urge him to something definite."

"I very greatly fear," returned Stottenheim, "that Kadden would be ashamed to confess his present deplorable condition to me, after the free expression of his former opinion concerning it. He is extremely proud and self-confident; he must be handled with gloves."

"One should exercise the greatest discretion in such affairs," said the Colonel. "I will embrace the first suitable opportunity of speaking confidentially with the poor fellow. He has no relatives to interest themselves in him. We will try to make life pleasanter to him in the future than it has been in the past, and we must let him know that *we* at least are upon his side."

Adolfine meanwhile had stepped to the window. She could see the young officer coming up the street, and turning to Stottenheim, who had gallantly followed her, she said pityingly, "How gloomy he looks!"

"Fearfully, fear-ful-ly," was the Lieutenant's reply. In a few moments Kadden entered the

room, and after the first somewhat embarrassed greeting the ladies recovered their self-possession, particularly as the young man was quite unconstrained. The conversation naturally drifted to the approaching autumn drill. The Colonel said that there would be quite a number of visiting troops. The news interested Kadden, who made inquiries into details. When this topic was disposed of satisfactorily, the ladies courteously interrogated him regarding his journey and his sojourn at Wangeroge. He graphically described the dwelling by the sea. The pleasant remembrance of the tranquil life that he and his wife had led together lingered with him yet, and made his heart glow. Although he did not mention Elizabeth's name, and did not indulge in many words, the recollection gave to his description a tone of pathos and fervor that perceptibly affected his listeners. This, at least, was not in accord with their preconceived views. Adolfine, however, was only the more confirmed in her belief. "It is the thought of the speedy release from his detestable bonds," she fondly imagined. His earnestness proved only an additional attraction, and her fancy wove many a bright web for the future. When Kadden mentioned in conclusion that the sea-air had been of incalculable benefit to his wife, there was an unbroken silence, a silence too marked, too suggestive, not to be noticed by him. The ready Stottenheim bravely rushed into the breach and cut short the awkward pause by saying precipitately, "I am

able to endorse that statement, for Frau Kadden, whom I had the pleasure of meeting at the railway station, looks most exceptionally blooming."

The annoyed young officer bade a hasty adieu, and accompanied by his friend walked for some time silently in the direction of his home. He had been too unpleasantly impressed by the silence and by the peculiar manner of the Bonsak ladies when he had alluded to his wife, not to inquire of the lieutenant as to the cause of it.

"My dear friend," began Stottenheim impressively, "I cannot conceal from you that you and your wife are talked about in Braunnhansen."

"Talked about! How?" asked Kadden, coldly.

Stottenheim now informed the young man very cautiously, but fully of the many rumors that were afloat concerning them.

"The world is mistaken," said Kadden quietly.

"You well know that my wife went to the seaside in search of health. Her greatest need was absolute quiet, which was to be obtained only by ignoring all society whatsoever, this course was, by the express advice of her physician, rigidly adhered to while we were upon the island."

"Do you suppose that it was a surprise to me?" continued Stottenheim, ignoring in his excitement what his friend had just said, "I was aware how matters stood before your departure; but, my dear Kadden," he added with effusion, "my whole heart is with you. I sympathize most sincerely with you. You need not try to conceal the truth

from me, I have known it for quite a while. This gossip with which society is now busy must reach a climax, but not through *your* fault; *you* have no reason to reproach yourself, my dear fellow."

"The gossip with which people are busying themselves! Do I understand you aright?" inquired Kadden, with a strange sinking of his voice. "Perhaps my wife's family are among the number?"

"Naturally so," continued the imperturbable Stottenheim. "They are fire and tow: but I have been informed only of what the Frau Oberförsterin has had to say about it."

"The Frau Oberförsterin!" repeated Kadden bitterly; and as they reached his door, he bade a hurried adieu and went into the house. Going at once to his room, he paced up and down absorbed in thought, confounded by the information he had received, and depressed by his unpleasant visit to the Colonel's. He was also threatened with one of his frequent headaches. It was an utter impossibility now to go to Woltheim.

Elizabeth meanwhile was happy with her children and her beloved grandparents. She was warmly welcomed upon her arrival and tenderly cared for, and yet was soon convinced that there was something in their manner which she could not understand.

After the children were asleep and the Oberförster's family had left, Elizabeth was for the first time alone with her grandparents. Herr Budmar,

taking her hand in his, looked her keenly in the face as he asked gravely, "My child, how is it with you?"

Elizabeth, in her anxiety not to trouble them, said with a smile, "I am very happy, even if at the same time I am unhappy"—her face lighting up with a sweet, innocent expression the while.

"Have you nothing to complain of?" her grandmother asked, with some anxiety.

"No," said Elizabeth, "I have nothing to complain of."

"Right," said her grandfather; "we will question you no further. You shall do exactly as you please."

When she mentioned that she intended writing to her mother, she was informed that she would be in Woltheim in a day or two. Upon hearing this news, Elizabeth's countenance fell, and she said quickly, "I am afraid she will be unhappy."

The next afternoon the Frau Oberförsterin came to report to her parents the meeting between her husband and Kadden. She was greatly excited over it, and accordingly unburdened her heart of all the apprehensions she had been troubling herself with concerning the future of the young couple.

"The case is no longer susceptible of doubt," she concluded. "Instead of coming to Woltheim to see his wife and children, he spent the afternoon with a party of officers playing nine-pins."

The father answered half cheerily, half solemnly, "Let us be thankful, Julchen, for what has been

granted us. Elizabeth's health and spirits are greatly improved, far beyond what I even dared to hope for. That is enough for the present."

"I too see that she is not unhappy over it," returned the Oberförsterin. "You are right, she is indifferent. Who knows how badly he has treated her? Her pride is roused, and the dignity of wifehood has at last asserted itself. Her love is a thing of the past, if the conduct rumor gives him credit for is true. I always thought it an ill-assorted marriage."

Herr Budmar, in answer, silently directed her attention to the window. Looking out, she saw Elizabeth in a light summer dress, a white flower upon her breast, the glow of tranquil happiness upon her lovely face, seated upon the grass playing with her children. "She does not look to me as if either pride or anger filled her heart," he said, after a thoughtful pause.

"Dear father, you totally misunderstand me," said Julchen.

"I understand you thoroughly," interrupted her father. "We will not talk any more about it."

They left the room, and approached Elizabeth and her children. Seeing a horseman at some little distance, she rose hurriedly and hastened to meet him. She soon perceived that it was only the groom, who, as he entered the garden, handed her a note from her husband. With a sinking heart she opened it.

It was only to inform her that he was not well

enough to ride to Woltheim that afternoon, but that he hoped to see her the following day.

After reading the missive, her first thought was, that she must go to him. Accordingly, she communicated the news to her grandparents and asked their advice.

"Is your master very sick?" queried Herr Budmar, of the groom.

"I think not. I heard Herr Von Stottenheim invite him to take a walk with him," answered the groom innocently.

"You need not go, Elizabeth," said her grandfather. "We will hope to see him to-morrow."

CHAPTER XXXII.

UPON the following morning, as Kadden returned from drill, the old grays from Woltheim drew up before his door. Pausing a few moments, as if to restrain a feeling of humiliation, he hastened down the steps and returned Herr Budmar's greeting, at first with some embarrassment, which vanished, however, at the first sight of the kind face, in which he had always felt entire confidence. He lifted from the carriage his little son, whom his grandfather thoughtfully had brought with him, and pressed him lovingly to his heart.

When they entered the room Herr Budmar grasped Kadden's hand again, and said with a smile, "As you did not come to see me, Otto, I have come to see you."

"Has Elizabeth told you everything?" he asked abruptly.

"Elizabeth has told us nothing," was his answer.

The young man gazed keenly into his kind face for a moment; "Nothing?" he again asked.

"We were fully satisfied with what she said, and I have come to ask how it is with *you*, Otto."

"I will be as discreet as she," returned the young man briefly. "I am not well. Since my return to Braunhausen, I feel as if I have lost all my courage."

"How is that?" said Herr Budmar.

"The very air of the place seems to oppress me, and the people oppress me. I feel a weight upon my breast which I am unable to shake off. I cannot think connectedly. Things have happened lately which have altered my ideas about the future."

Herr Budmar was silent, being unable to understand the meaning of these unintelligible words, though they furnished him a new phase of the relations existing between the young pair.

"Pardon me," said Kadden, after a short pause, "if for a few days I do not go to Woltheim; and if the Frau Oberförsterin," he said bitterly, "is disposed to talk too freely of my affairs, you, sir, must try to keep her quiet."

"My wife is expecting to see you to-day. She will be disappointed if you do not come," he said kindly.

"I would be glad to go," he answered promptly.

"The Frau Oberförsterin shall not intermeddle in your affairs: I will see to that," the old man said with emphasis.

"I beg you to forgive my want of consideration," said Kadden, repenting his angry outburst, and shocked that he had spoken so plainly.

A knock was heard at the half-open door, and presently Stottenheim entered the room. He had seen the gray horses standing before the house, and made up his mind that his poor friend should not be left to fight his battle single-handed and alone.

Haply he had arrived at the opportune moment, and, as a protecting angel, he would stand shoulder to shoulder by the side of his friend.

With his usual effusiveness he greeted Herr Budmar, whose calm demeanor and kindly response somewhat disconcerted him. But he was a man of the world, quick to recover himself. A profusion of smooth words glided from his lips. "I have brought an invitation from our Colonel," he continued, turning ingenuously to Kadden, "he wishes you to dine with him to-day."

"I will be compelled to decline," the young man answered in some embarrassment. "I expect to go to Woltheim this afternoon."

Stottenheim shrugged his shoulders. "You had better change your mind," he said; "this is the first time that you have been invited since your return. Your absence will be apt to give offence, particularly as you are invited to meet the officers who are at present visiting in Braunhausen."

"By all means dine with the Colonel, Otto," said Herr Budmar. "Ride to Woltheim afterwards. You can spend the evening with us: it is moonlight." The young officer hesitated a moment, then concluded to accept the Colonel's invitation. "But Frederick," he said, turing to his little son, "that will be treating you badly."

"Take him along," said Stottenheim readily, equal to all emergencies. "The young ladies will be delighted to see their little favorite again. I assure you that he is much thought of at the Col-

onel's," said the Lieutenant, turning toward the old gentleman, whom he naturally expected to raise some objections to this proposal. But again he was mistaken.

"That arrangement will answer admirably," Herr Budmar said pleasantly, "then his father can bring him back to Woltheim."

The child was greatly pleased with this permission, and Kadden, delighted with his readiness to remain with him, gave him a warm embrace.

Herr Budmar now bade a kindly adieu, and was courteously accompanied by both young men to his carriage. Stottenheim did not return with his friend to the house, but with all speed made directly for the Colonel's, to report the success of his diplomacy.

"You see, my dear ladies," he began eagerly, before he had crossed the threshold, "I cannot do much for him; my poor friend is as helpless as a conscript, he answers automatically to the call. I found the gray horses standing before the door, and the old Herr closeted with him."

"It is utterly incomprehensible to me how they dare go first to him," said Frau von Bonsak, indignantly.

"Men have no delicacy of feeling," interposed Adolfine hotly; "I should think that he has shown his intentions clearly enough since his return to Braunhausen."

"He looked both pale and miserable," said Stottenheim, sympathetically. "Not one word of

greeting did he send to his wife," he added, shrugging his shoulders significantly.

At this inopportune moment, Kadden was announced. His little follower happily afforded a subject for unembarrassed conversation. The ladies were in a state of gentle excitement over the sweet child, who really was a favorite with them all, particularly with Cäcilie, who had during the past spring spent considerable time with Elizabeth and had enjoyed sharing her care of the children. Cäcilie was truly a lovely and sensible girl, but to-day Adolfine monopolized the care of the boy. He must sit beside her at the table.

Kadden had not the most distant idea of the foolish fancies in which the young girl was indulging, and upon leaving thanked her cordially for the trouble she had taken with his little son.

Toward evening Frau Budmar and Elizabeth paced restlessly up and down the lawn before the old house at Woltheim until the anxiously expected horseman made his appearance. Elizabeth lifted the child from his father's arms and greeted them both affectionately. Dismounting, Kadden extended his hand to Frau Budmar, who received him as lovingly as she had bade him adieu at his departure. Courteously offering the gracious old lady his arm, he said apologetically, "It was inexcusable on my part not to have come to Woltheim yesterday."

"I knew that it was not because you had forgotten me," Frau Budmar responded smilingly.

"Certainly not," he continued, reverently raising her hand at the same time to his lips, and kissing it.

The young officer felt as though he had been wandering in the mazes of a bad dream, and had but now awakened. At the close of the evening, when he took his departure, the much dreaded visit over, he felt as if a weight had been lifted from his breast.

When Elizabeth accompanied her husband to the door, where the horse stood impatiently awaiting his master's coming, she asked if he had any objection to her and the children's going the following afternoon to the fir height, as he had mentioned during the course of the evening that he would be unable to come that day to Woltheim. "Should you have time, you might ride that far to see the children; but," she added, as he hesitated, "we will not be disappointed if you cannot come."

Meanwhile he had mounted his horse. As he clasped her hand at parting the moonshine lay caressingly upon the sweet upturned face. Gazing lovingly at her, and still holding her hand, he said in a low, tender tone, "I will gladly come to meet you to-morrow."

On the following afternoon Elizabeth, with her children and Johanna, started for the old trysting place. The young wife looked dreamily down upon the towers of Braunhausen. She had not waited long until she saw a horseman coming rapidly towards them. "Here comes papa," cried

Frederick delightedly. It proved to be, however, only the groom, who was the bearer of a message from his master, that he could not be released from service that afternoon, and did not wish his wife and children to wait for him in vain. Frederick's disappointment was quickly appeased by a box of bonbons, which accompanied the information.

An impending shower necessitated a hasty return. They had scarcely reached the house when the storm broke in all its fury. Strong gusts of wind, accompanied by thunder and lightning and heavy rain, continued until far into the night. The following morning Elizabeth saw to her disappointment that the sky was still overcast with heavy clouds. A meeting with her husband upon the fir mountain could not be calculated upon to-day, but calmly and patiently she would await the coming of a brighter to-morrow.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

UPON the following day, when old Frederick drove to the railway station for the Geheimeräthin, the weather was still inclement. Elizabeth stood at the window contemplating the gray clouded sky. She was in a state of nervous excitement at the prospect of so soon meeting her mother. She knew not what the result of her coming might be, but naturally it would be different from the meeting with her grandparents.

Aunt Julchen, after due consideration, had resolved to go to the train and meet her sister there. She must speak with her alone before she had an opportunity of talking with the old folks. Frau Budmar had requested her daughter, greatly to her chagrin, to leave them undisturbed at Woltheim the evening Kadden was expected to be there; and upon her subsequent inquiry as to "how was it *now?*" she was briefly informed that matters were much better between the young couple than before their departure for Wangeroge. Upon being closely questioned, her mother confessed that she had not spoken with either Elizabeth or her husband on the subject. Julchen, aware that her parents thought but little about this earthly life, naturally was confirmed in her conclusion that they were willing to accept Eliza-

beth's sad fate as a chastisement sent by the Lord for her profit, and therefore would not give the poor child suitable practical advice. She had already corresponded with her sister about the reports which were in circulation before the return of the young pair to Braunhausen. The mother had been long secretly aware of the unhappiness that existed between Elizabeth and her husband, and was not surprised that at last a climax had been reached. Her motherly heart was in tender love and sympathy with her dear daughter, and the rumors of Kadden's harsh and unfeeling treatment of his wife in that far-off strange island, was a humiliation and sorrow hard to be borne. An agony of self-reproach tormented her at having been instrumental in bringing the pair together. She could not help regarding this sorrowful culmination as a punishment for her unfaithfulness in leading her young daughter into worldly society. She had held a confidential counsel with her husband, and with the General's family regarding a separation, if it would be justifiable under the circumstances, but she was obliged to confess that this course would only be adding one sin to another; for, according to the tenets of her faith, she believed that marriage was a sacramental vow, from which none but God could release them. Pastor Schlosser upon whom she called, also expressed the same opinion.

Emilie's counsel was for Elizabeth's friends to try to effect a *temporary* separation from her hus-

band. In the unfortunate young wife's present forlorn and unhappy condition, she fondly hoped that some spiritual good might be accomplished, and that through this means she might be brought back to the Lord. Her husband's unjustifiable treatment would naturally destroy all his influence over her.

The Frau Oberförsterin was greatly surprised at meeting Emilie and Pastor Schlosser at the train. After many contradictory resolves she had at length decided to accompany Frau Kühneman to Woltheim. For some years she had been Elise's confidential friend, her counselor, her director in all weighty spiritual affairs. The Geheimeräthin wished her to accompany her as a support, as well as check upon the anticipated line of conduct of her unworldly parents. Kept advised by her sister Julchen, she could not comprehend their attitude, and had no hope of their arriving at an agreement as to a proper course of action.

When the two sisters found themselves in the privacy of the close carriage, they indulged in a warm embrace. The unhappy mother sobbed aloud, and as Julchen was sympathetic, their tears flowed without restraint. Emilie with a profound sigh looked significantly at her husband. Her countenance said plainly, "I cannot help feeling sorry. I have long seen and predicted this misfortune. It could not in the nature of things end otherwise." Her husband with a pained expression looked out of the window.

"How is Elizabeth? Is she very wretched?" asked the mother solicitously.

"No," said her sister, encouragingly, "she is not. The sea air and the salt baths have been of incalculable benefit to her."

"But have matters gone so far as rumor gives them credit for?" asked Elise anxiously.

"Yes," responded Julchen, "it is even so."

And now followed a detailed account of Kadden's conduct since his return to Braunhausen. The meeting with the Oberförster and the game of nine-pins came first in the catalogue of delinquencies. Lastly she stated that her father had gone to see the young officer before he had ridden over to Woltheim, or even sent any message to his wife or children; that notwithstanding a full knowledge of all the facts of the case, the old people would not credit any reports, nor would they allow any harm to be spoken of him before them. "And as for poor Elizabeth," she added, "she has had as yet no opportunity of unburdening her mind of her troubles."

"Poor child," sighed the mother sorrowfully; Pastor Schlosser meanwhile shook his head deprecatingly.

"Why do you shake your head, Wilhelm?" asked Emilie of her husband.

"I for my part do not believe that he has treated her so badly as rumor gives him credit for, and I would counsel your ladies to act with great prudence in so delicate a matter."

"The case is clear," returned the Oberförsterin, "we *cannot* be mistaken. Certainly you agree with us in thinking that Elizabeth is to be pitied, that it is our duty to stand by the child."

"Is she very greatly depressed?" inquired the mother, with a sigh.

"For a wonder she is not," replied the aunt; "but I can fully understand her present mood. It is evident she has lost all love for her husband; her pride is aroused, and she is ready to assert the dignity of wifehood—a very natural conclusion," she added, with decision.

"Not for Elizabeth," interposed the clergyman, with emphasis.

"Not natural for Elizabeth to be offended and indignant at her husband's unjustifiable treatment?" asked Emilie, now fully roused. "Think, Wilhelm: she is of a most impressionable nature, full of emotion; and now, when she has justice upon her side, is it natural that she should be other than herself? No, she will abhor him in proportion to the love she formerly bore him. And if we would benefit her spiritually we must profit by this opportunity. Now is the time, the very moment, in which to free her from the foolish, weak love through which she has been so prejudicially enthralled, and thereby draw her poor stricken heart from the world."

"If she has any love for her husband, do you not fear that by so doing you will be the cause of her making a dreadfully false step?" he gravely asked.

"Love is an utter impossibility under such circumstances," interposed Emilie. "I know Elizabeth's character too well; she is a spoiled child, and if we find her in this mood we cannot blame her. We will therefore make no reproaches; the temptation has been too great for her. Rely upon it, there will come a decided change. As I look back upon the past," she continued, . . . and now there followed a catalogue of Elizabeth's besetting sins—haughtiness, self-confidence, levity. "It must indeed be a bitter humiliation for her," she concluded.

In conversation such as this did Emilie and her more kindly coadjutor, Aunt Julchen, indulge, until at length they had no more to say. As they were driving past Braunhausen, not far from the review ground, the young officer's groom, who was there awaiting Kadden's orders, espied the carriage, and was soon at Frederick's side. "My master is here," he said smilingly, as he looked into the coach, "shall I call him?" The Geheimeräthin shook her head in answer, and Frederick drove on quickly.

"Strange that the stupid creature does not know what goes on around him," said the Frau Oberförsterin, with some vexation.

"Yes, it is *very* singular; servants generally have *some* knowledge of the annoyances incidental to the families in which they live," returned Pastor Schlosser with a quiet smile.

"Kadden is much too wise and shrewd," inter-

posed Emilie, "not to avoid saying or doing anything before his inferiors which is not in strict accordance with his dignity; and besides, his groom appears to be unusually stupid."

Elizabeth meanwhile stood at the window, looking dreamily at the rapidly-moving clouds. How dark and threatening they hung over the fir mountain! The thought darted through her mind, "Would it have been better had I never met him? would I efface the past, were it possible to do so? I am still so young—only two and twenty—life is all before me. No, no!"—a passionate voice spoke within her, which weakened all such murmurs—"I would not have it so if I could. I would not give up the sweet memories of the past. I will look hopefully into the future, and I will love my husband. *Will?* no, I *do* love my husband with every fibre of my being—and my dear children too; I will bear *anything* for the love I have for them."

The carriage rolled into the court-yard. Elizabeth instinctively pictured the meeting with her watchful, anxious mother. Her first impulse was to retreat; but forcing herself to be composed, she walked a few moments about the room.

"Gently, gently, my dear child," said her grandfather soothingly, as he noticed her agitation, stroking her forehead meanwhile caressingly, and then going with her to meet the coming guests. How surprised they were to see Emilie and her husband. Elizabeth met them with embarrassment, feeling that the eyes of each were upon her face, as if wait-

ing to hear from her a confirmation or a contradiction as to her domestic troubles. The visitors entered the room, accompanied by the Oberförsterin. Herr Budmar and his good wife tried to look unconscious, but in vain.

The grandmother, when the guests had seated themselves, gazed silently at the huge coffee-urn which had been brought into the room for the refreshment of the travellers, as though she hoped it would afford some opportunity for conversation. Emilie to her great annoyance perceived that her husband endeavored to help the grandparents in preventing an opportunity for the onset that was impending. It was evident to the sensible pastor that the three ladies had entered into a conspiracy. The Geheimeräthin was to inaugurate it by questioning Elizabeth, and by so doing affording her an opportunity of unburdening herself of her troubles. They hoped to convince the grandparents of the mistake they were making in rejecting the poor child's confidence. Julchen was the reserve, in case the mother and Emilie failed to bring about what they had so skillfully planned. The pastor, they trusted, would meanwhile maintain a strict neutrality.

And now an awkward pause ensued. Frau Budmar again looked helplessly at the coffee-urn, when suddenly the Geheimeräthin threw her arms around Elizabeth's neck and sobbed out, "My dear child, I cannot bear to see you look so sad." Her tears now flowed freely and without restraint, her daughter weeping in sympathy.

"Elise, be quiet," commanded her father, "do not torment yourself unnecessarily; you have no cause to weep."

"Dear father," she exclaimed, trembling with excitement, "why will you not suffer the poor child to tell her troubles?"

"If Elizabeth desires to speak, I have no objection," said Herr Budmar with some irritation.

Elizabeth only shook her head in reply.

"Elizabeth, not to your *mother*?" said the Geheimeräthin, reproachfully.

"I do not wish to trouble you," was her evasive answer.

"You will not trouble me. I pity you from my very heart," returned the poor woman. "I long to comfort you, my child. You will hear no reproaches from me."

Elizabeth involuntarily glanced at Emilie and her aunt Julchen.

"Dear Elizabeth," said Emilie insinuatingly, "do not hesitate on account of our presence. We have the deepest sympathy for you. We also have no reproaches to make. *He* is far more guilty than you."

"Yes, we will protect you from *this man*," added aunt Julchen, encouragingly.

"From what man?" asked Elizabeth.

"From the man who has now power over you," returned Emilie, in a calm, measured tone, "from the man who has made you unhappy. You shall find a refuge with us—with your own family; yes,

the comfort and protection that *he* has denied you."

"Made me unhappy? Of whom are you speaking?" asked Elizabeth in indignant surprise.

"My dear child, the whole world knows how he treated you in Wangeroge, and we are fully aware of how he treated you before your departure," said her mother. "You need not try to conceal it from us, and you must no longer keep silence. Tell us unreservedly all that troubles you. Now is the proper time to help you."

"Are you speaking of my *husband*?" again asked Elizabeth, inexpressibly shocked. The ladies exchanged quick glances of intelligence, and the pastor, who had the while been standing in the embrasure of the window, gazing outside in unspeakable vexation, now turned and advanced a few steps into the room.

"All the world says that of my husband!" continued Elizabeth indignantly, "then tell the world, or rather the 'world's wife,' that she is mistaken. I alone am to blame. I alone am the cause of our unhappiness. He has always been kind, considerate and tender toward me. His nature is noble and manly," she went on eagerly and hurriedly. "I have caused him grief and heart-ache," she said in an agony of self-reproach, "but I love him with all my soul and mind and strength, and with the help of God," she added solemnly and with fervor, "I will be a better wife to him in the future, and will try to make some amends, some atone-

ment, for the wrongs that I have done him, and for the pain I have caused him."

Raising for a moment her tearful, troubled face to the now shrinking, although inquiring eyes that were fastened upon her, she hurried from the room, leaving her thoroughly discomfited hearers in mute astonishment at this unexpected revelation. But not the old grandfather, who looked well pleased as he gently clasped his wife's hand in his, giving it a congratulatory pressure; and then, after an awkward pause, said, "I hope you ladies are all satisfied."

No one replied, but the mother, smiling through her tears, extended her hand in answer to her pleased father. Frau Budmar now left the room, and after some time returned with Elizabeth, whose lovely face shone with the light that comes to one who has been in converse with the Lord—bright, loving, trustful. They all saw her grandmother had been with her not in vain.

Emilie felt rebuked; overwhelmed by a sense of shame, she would gladly have left Woltheim immediately, for she saw that she was no welcome guest; but the Geheimeräthin had arranged to stay two days longer, and her husband was so delighted with Herr Budmar's society that she was obliged to remain.

The Frau Oberförsterin and Emilie had so persistently taken the contrary for granted, that they still entertained a strong feeling of opposition to crediting the to them most unexpected confession of Eliza-

beth. How could two such wise women as they *both* be mistaken, in a matter too that was so *plain*? She was a sweet, unselfish child, who in a spirit of self-denial and foolish love for her husband, was blinded to his unjustifiable treatment of her, and to his many and manifest faults. Her passionate words were not to be trusted, for her manner was diametrically opposed to her utterance. If she was suffered to remain under the overpowering influence of this man, she would do *anything* to preserve his love; she would again mingle in the frivolities of the world, for her health and strength were now fully restored. All these sage reflections were repeated by Emilie to her husband, and she concluded triumphantly with the question, "What then will be the end of this ill-assorted marriage? It requires no prophet to tell." As she finished she looked in a self-satisfied manner at her husband, whose protracted silence was beginning to be irritating and intolerable to her.

After a lengthy pause, he began gravely, "Emilie, I advise you to defer your triumph, and keep your pity all for yourself. You are as much mistaken in your estimate of Kadden as of Elizabeth."

The next morning the young officer was apprised by messenger of his mother-in-law's arrival at Woltheim, but he excused himself from going there by saying that it was an impossibility to be released that day from his military duties, but that upon the following day he would meet the Geheime-räthin at the train and pay his respects to her, and

that he hoped after the autumnal drill to be able, accompanied by Elizabeth, to see her in Berlin.

His excuse was in strict accordance with the truth, even if it gave him pleasure to remain away. He might have found time to ride over in the evening, but when the groom informed him that the Frau Oberförsterin met the Geheimräthin at the train, he felt sure of the subject of conversation between the sisters, and concluded that it was the far wiser course for him to leave the family conference, undisturbed by his presence, in the safe hands of Herr Budmar and his good wife.

Yet after the lapse of the first day his conscience troubled him. He thought of the duty he owed to the grandparents and to his wife, and when he found during the afternoon that he had a few leisure hours, he mounted his horse and rode to Woltheim.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE weather had been more or less inclement, with strong gusts of wind and frequent showers of rain. The large family was gathered in the living room at Woltheim. Elizabeth, glad of an opportunity to relieve her feverish excitement, took advantage of the earliest cessation of the rain, and started out alone to take a walk. She could no longer remain within doors, subject to the criticising, all-observant eyes of Emilie and Aunt Julchen, and felt the need of rapid movement as she walked briskly in the direction of the fir mount.

"There is Kadden," exclaimed Pastor Schlosser, advancing to meet the coming guest, who had entered the garden, and was rapidly approaching the house.

"You here?" said Kadden in glad surprise.

The young men greeted each other warmly, to Emilie's great annoyance. Supported by his friend's presence, the young officer walked composedly into the room.

Immediately upon his entrance, Kadden inquired after his wife, and was informed by Frau Budmar that she had gone to take a walk, but that she expected her back soon. A half hour passed, and still she did not come. Her husband restlessly left his seat by the grandfather, and retired to the

recess of the window. Lifting his little son upon his lap, he looked gravely out upon the drenched, drooping flowers, upon the trees whose dripping boughs bent low with their weight of moisture, and shivered as the fierce gusts of wind swept mercilessly through their naked branches. Where had Elizabeth gone? Surely not to the height! "I cannot see what makes her stay away so long in this wretched weather."

As he spoke he saw her emerge from the shelter of a clump of trees; hastily transferring his little son to his friend, Kadden left the room unobserved by the rest of the party.

In a very few moments he met his wife carrying, in her hand a nosegay of wild flowers. Upon reaching the house he solicitously removed her wet wrap, and she stood before him, clad as he so distinctly remembered her that day so long ago at the railway station at Braunhausen. Was he at this time as anxious and as doubtful as he had been then? Could he not trust the clear, candid eyes that looked so confidingly into his? His despondent heart said, "It is only her loving, child-like nature that prompts her."

"Where were you so long, Elizabeth?" he asked.

"I have been to the fir mountain," was the embarrassed answer.

"In this weather?" he said, with tender reproach. "You are cold and wet," he continued, pressing both her hands in his.

"I could not stay any longer in that room," she answered significantly.

"You were wise to leave," he said with a sigh. "We will remain here for a little while, for I will soon have to bid you farewell for several weeks. I leave Braunhausen either to-morrow or the day following."

"Can't you come to Woltheim again before you go?" she asked without looking up.

"I cannot," he replied.

Gladly would he have heard her assure him that she wished him to do so. The last evening that they spent in Wangeroge she had naïvely told him that she was looking forward with pleasure to her sojourn with her grandparents, and he had no reason now to believe that his presence would add to her happiness. He looked anxiously into the clear, bright eyes, then upon her wedding ring, impressed with the thought that the "bond which united his love forever and alone to her had acquired fresh strength and sanctity." "She will be all my own, in spite of the gossip of the little world of Braunhausen, and of the ceaseless chatter of her officious relatives. If only the coming three weeks were past!"

"Is your clothing in order, Otto?" she inquired, her housewifely duties pressing upon her.

"Everything is ready," he responded. "A soldier does not need much." Meanwhile they stepped to the window, where stood a stand upon which lay some books. Opening one instinctively,

he read silently, and then with a somewhat bitter smile said, "You can hand this in my name to the Frau Oberförsterin to read."

Elizabeth took the book and read, "What more passing than words? A breath! But very, very few words of ours rest with us; we forget them as soon as spoken. God does not forget them. They do God's work or Satan's work on earth; they pass in act, they abide in effect." Remembering the scenes of yesterday, and that her husband had heard the uncomplimentary rumors, Elizabeth raised her appealing eyes to his. He saw that they were filling with tears, and said hurriedly, "You need not give it to her to read," adding after a moment's pause, "but do not listen to her gossip."

Frederick now came in search of his papa to beg him to take him in his arms; but his father, looking at his watch, found that his time had expired, and that he might expect his horse to be brought round at any moment. Accordingly they at once returned to the living room.

Simultaneously with his approach, Frau Kühneman, Emilie and the Oberförsterin emerged from the adjoining room. They had again met in secret session. When his mother-in-law perceived that the young officer was preparing to leave, she advanced hurriedly, saying, "Otto, I am anxious that Elizabeth should spend a few weeks with me in Berlin, but her grandparents do not seem to wish it."

"I am very glad that they do not," returned the

young man curtly. He was annoyed and irritated that her wishes should be different from his. He could not bear the thought that Elizabeth should go to Berlin.

"After she has made her visit here, you will permit her to come to me for a few weeks?" she asked. "I am anxious that she should do so before she begins housekeeping."

"Does Elizabeth wish it?" he asked nervously.

"Certainly ; she will be delighted to come," said her mother quickly.

The young officer's eyes flashed with anger at this infelicitous speech. "We will see to that later on," he said brusquely, and turned away. Coolly and abstractedly he bade them adieu.

Mounting his horse, he flew madly over the meadow; then suddenly checking his steed, he turned around, and taking off his cap waved it in silent farewell, his wife meanwhile standing dazed and troubled at the open door with Frederick in her arms. The little fellow's heart swelled with disappointment as he called out, "Adieu, adieu, dear papa."

"There we have it," whispered the Frau Oberförsterin, who with her sister and Emilie was standing by the window. "Is *that* a gentleman? With our husbands we can at least *talk* reasonably, but one dare not open one's lips before this man."

"Poor Elizabeth!" sighed the mother.

Upon the following day the guests took their departure. Elizabeth was relieved and glad when she found herself alone with her grandparents.

The rainy days had passed. The September sun shone brightly over the refreshed and verdant earth. The meadows gleamed in their emerald sheen, while here and there solitary bits of red and yellow foliage upon tree and shrub glowed radiantly between the fresh, green leaves. Elizabeth enjoyed the luxury of her quiet, restful life. Solitude was a refreshment to her, exercising a gentle and salutary influence upon her spirits, and her efforts to be cheerful were not altogether unsuccessful.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE day after, Kadden found himself stationed on an estate, which lay several hours distant on the other side of Braunhausen; and who should his host prove to be but the summer sojourner at Nordernei, who had communicated the interesting and highly-flavored gossip among the young officer's acquaintances in the garrison? The autumnal drill was a great pleasure to the Oberamtinnann Wiebert. He was not wealthy, but generous to an exceptional degree. He resolved that during the encampment his house should be headquarters for the officers. Adolfine and her elder sister were invited. The former indulged in brilliant expectations, and in dazzling beauty sat in the pavilion among the other spectators, and greeted with her most radiant smile the dusty, tired warriors as they rode thitherward.

A grand dinner inaugurated the ceremonies. No expense was spared by the host to make it a success; such occasions were the Bailiff's supreme delight, a full reward for all his labors.

Kadden had in times past accepted the dinner as a necessary part of the ceremonies, but so intolerable and distasteful as it was to-day he had never before found it.

As the officers, the colonel at their head, offered their grateful acknowledgements for the hospital-

ity so munificently extended to them, Kadden's set, grave face presented a marked contrast to the rest of his comrades. In such conviviality the colonel recognized life's true enjoyment, agreeable and refreshing interruptions to the wearisome monotony of the soldier's life. Adolfine almost lost patience at the young officer's apathy, notwithstanding the lofty anticipations in which she was unwarrantably indulging. When she spoke of his little son, however, who was really a favorite of hers, his stern features relaxed and his dark eyes beamed with pleasure. "He is not made of ice, then," thought the young girl at his side. In the evening music and cards constituted the amusements for the young people. The elders also arranged their tables for the latter amusement. "Do you belong to the young or to the elderly gentlemen?" asked the Bailiff, somewhat facetiously, of Herr von Kadden.

"Place me with neither for this evening," was the officer's rejoinder, "as I have some important letters to write," and excusing himself, he abruptly withdrew.

"It is sad to see so promising a young man so unhappy," said the Bailiff to the Colonel and Stottenheim, who stood near.

"Yes, marriage is a lottery; one wins and another loses," said the Colonel sententiously.

"It is fortunate when one happens to draw a blank," laughingly responded the Oberamtman, "that he can make another venture."

"Certainly," said the Colonel assentingly—for the Oberamtman had been divorced and was now living with his second wife. "But think of the folly, the stupidity, of the so-called churchly people, who affirm that a marriage cannot be annulled."

"Why not?" asked the Bailiff in surprise.

"Because they say it is against God's command," was Stottenheim's quick reply.

"Well, I must confess," began the Bailiff good-naturedly, "that I do not exactly know what God's commands are, except that marriages are made in heaven, and that what God has joined together man shall not put asunder. But there are many things in the Bible that do not square with life."

"Certainly," said the Colonel, in full accord. "Experience is the best teacher."

"The way was simple enough to me," returned Wiebert, "my first wife and I lived together like dog and cat. I confess to you," he said in a confidential tone, "that I threatened her at one time with my hunting whip—but she was a malicious creature," he interjected. "It did not take long to get a divorce; and now, my dear Colonel, you shall be the judge whether I do not live happily with my present wife. It was not my fault that we did not get along pleasantly."

"You should hear old Herr Budmar express his views," said Stottenheim, who for the sake of argument had taken the opposite side of the case. 'The devil,' he said upon one occasion, 'permits

divorce in his kingdom, and man after the evil inclination of his heart takes advantage of this; but it is not allowed to the children of God, for they consider marriage a sacramental vow, from which none but He can release them.' "

"Hear, hear!" began the Oberamtmann, good naturedly.

"I have seen somewhat of the life of these people," continued Stottenheim, "you know that a man can never learn too much," he added smilingly.

The Bailiff nodded encouragingly.

"I assure you," said the Lieutenant, "that the people who accept the Bible as a rule of action and endeavor to fulfil its commands are truly the happier in this life, and they also have the promise of the life which is to come."

"A beautiful faith, a beautiful faith, but not suitable for mortal man. No, my dear friend, that is all illusion: God created us men and not angels."

"He would agree with you fully there," interposed Stottenheim, who was fond of hearing himself talk. "They acknowledge that we cannot obey God's commands in our own strength, and now comes in, according to one of their articles of faith, the need of a Redeemer, a Mediator between God and man."

The Bailiff shook his head reflectively, "No, I will not trouble myself about these things this evening. One is compelled to listen to such talk

in church. If I allowed myself to think on the subject I should not be able to sleep at night."

"Whatever does not accord with life, I throw overboard," said the Colonel; "being moral and upright, we fulfill God's command; and nothing whatever could be more degrading to man's nature than to be compelled to live with a wife who is unsuitable to him."

"Right," said the Bailiff cordially.

"Herr Budmar would say," interposed the irrepressible Stottenheim, "that even under such circumstances it would be better to remain together."

"I would really like to know if the family are opposed to Kadden's obtaining a divorce," said the Colonel. "The Oberförster appears to be a sensible man."

"The Frau Oberförsterin," said Stottenheim, "is trying to effect a temporary separation, but does not wish a divorce."

"Foolish!" returned the Bailiff, and, as Stottenheim was at that moment called away, the Colonel continued confidentially, "I feel it my duty to advise this young man; he has no one to whom he can turn for counsel. He is completely in the power of these people."

"Surely he is a free man," returned the bailiff quickly. "Kadden, it is true, has associated with these people for some years, and has breathed the same air, and is necessarily imbued to some extent with their peculiar notions; at least he may not have the courage to undertake a definite line of ac-

tion. But may be you are right; it is difficult to come to a conclusion in such matters. A friend set *me* first upon my legs. I will talk with Herr von Kadden about it, for I have passed through an experience."

"No," said the Colonel, "that will not do. Kadden is a peculiar man. We must first find out exactly how his wife and her family feel about a divorce. In order to help him, we must approach him with great caution."

The Oberamtmann was satisfied with the Colonel's view of the case, and resolved that he would talk first with the Oberförster about it. Notwithstanding their difference in religious views, he considered him a sensible man, with whom he had much in common. He bethought him also that he had some negotiations to make regarding some pasture land, and would embrace that opportunity to talk with him.

The following day they were not on duty, and accordingly the officers who were stationed in the adjoining villages were invited that evening to a ball at the Oberamtmann's. The weather was exceptionally fine, and the young gentlemen and ladies wished to take advantage of it. Kadden had returned somewhat early from his solitary walk, and found a large company in the grounds back of the garden. Adolfine and two officers were already on horseback.

"There comes Kadden," cried Stottenheim.
"He will try the animal for you; he understands

all about a lady's horse." The gentlemen dismounted, and the young officer observed that upon one of the horses was placed a lady's saddle.

"Yes, my dear Kadden," said the Bailiff, "you try the horse. My daughter insists upon riding, and I feel somewhat timid about permitting it."

Kadden mounted, rode the horse for a while, then assured the Bailiff that the young lady could ride without the slightest danger. The Oberamtmann requested the young man to act as his daughter's escort; he was courteous enough to consent. He waited a short time for his own horse to be brought, and accompanied the young lady, while Adolfine, escorted by the two officers, sped to the woods. She soon returned, however, and, with a mixture of playfulness and audacity, called Kadden's attention to the beautiful animal she was riding, and requested him to accompany her. To this proposal he saw no objection. She was a beautiful and fearless rider, and he naturally praised her horsemanship. Boldly and proudly she rode by his side to the house, the young officer meanwhile utterly unconscious of the nature of her emotions, and the encouragement which he had unwittingly given.

In the afternoon the sky threatened rain, and the guests were compelled to remain indoors. They entertained themselves agreeably with music. Kadden was a willing listener, and enjoyed both the instrumental and the vocal performance. He had drawn near to the piano and was conversing

with one of his comrades, when, instinctively, he was conscious that he was the subject of a whispered remark. One of the daughters of the house had begun the ballad, "It is appointed in God's counsel," when Adolfine hastily drew the music from the rack, and Stottenheim, with a significant glance at his friend, lowered his voice to a confidential pitch.

Kadden was painfully conscious of what all this by-play meant, and was irritated by it; but he repressed his annoyance, drew nearer to the piano, and quietly asked, "Will you not sing that beautiful ballad, Fräulein?" The young lady confusedly restored the discarded music to the rack.

"You also sing, do you not?" inquired the elder sister, who was innocent of the remark.

"He sings divinely," answered Stottenheim. Then turning to his friend he asked pathetically as though he had said, "Poor fellow, do not be so sad!" "Why will you not sing?"

His manner and tone were so irritating to Kadden that he at once seated himself at the instrument, which the young lady had meanwhile vacated, and said smilingly, "You must allow me to sing this ballad; it is a great favorite of mine."

Stottenheim and his friends were put a little out of countenance by this action. Herr von Kadden sang the entire ballad; the wonderful beauty of his voice was appreciated by all. Rising from the instrument, whose vibrating notes still lingered in the room, he listened calmly a few moments to

their unbounded applause, then quietly left the room.

"What a wonderful voice!" exclaimed the young ladies.

"Yes," said Stottenheim, "if one did not know he was a married man one would fancy that he had just been betrothed; he is so *distrail*, so *rêveur*, addicted to solitary walks, gathers wild flowers, and does all sorts of indescribable things."

Adolfine, in her silliness, was greatly embarrassed by these words of Stottenheim. A deep blush burned on her cheek, and in confusion she turned away.

The next day the squadrons marched a still greater distance than usual, intending to bivouac for the night, and return the following morning. This break gave the young ladies time to tranquilize themselves and to arrange their plans. Adolfine, completely blinded by her imagination, was absorbed by one feeling, filled with one idea, namely, that she was the beloved of Kadden. She fed her foolish hopes upon her interpretation of the occurrences of the preceding evening. The young officer had remained for some hours in the ball-room, and to her manifest satisfaction, had twice during that time taken a seat beside her mother and herself. He had spoken of his children and his sense of isolation. She felt the deepest sympathy for him, and thought how she would try to comfort him when next they met.

The young girl was about taking a solitary walk,

in order that she could indulge uninterruptedly in her pleasant reveries, when she saw a farmer's boy pass by with the post-bag. Calling to him, she asked if he was on his road to Braunhausen. Upon his replying that he was, she took the bag out of his hand, ostensibly to see if it contained a letter of her father's, and stepped with it to the window. Her curiosity was soon gratified; in the bag was a letter addressed to *Frau von Kadden*. She handled it, looked inquisitively at it this way and that, then wondered what was written in it. On this issue hung perhaps the happiness of her life! She did not hesitate long; the temptation was irresistible; she concealed the letter in her hand, while she handed back the post-bag to the boy, gazing after him nervously until he had left the court, and the coast clear.

Hastening into the garden, she carried her prize with her, and seeking a secluded spot, she leaned against the trunk of a huge tree, concealed by which she might escape observation. Breaking the seal, she hesitated a moment before opening the letter. It was as though she were coming nearer and still nearer to the realization of her dreams of bliss, from a state of doubt and mere anticipation to the certainty of happiness inexpressible. Opening the letter, she read and reread it, with feelings of intense and unmitigated bitterness; and then, with face aflame, she crushed the unwelcome pages in her hand, and thinking that she heard steps approaching, hurriedly fled still deeper into the recesses of the grounds.

What had she read ! Surely nothing wonderful—no recrimination, no reproaches; nothing but a simple, brief, manly letter, unmistakable in its tone of love and devotion to his young wife at Woltheim. He had then never cared for *her*, and above all she was frightened to find herself holding this dreadful letter in her hands.

How could she have been such a fool!—so blinded! Kadden, that grave, quiet man, to have entertained an improper love for her! Shame and anger strove for the mastery. How much better could she have spent these last, beautiful days, she reflected angrily—hot tears of mortification filling her eyes the while. Yesterday, the evening of the ball, when she could have shone so preëminently, and in her folly had taken no thought for any man save him alone, who cared nothing for her! “How fortunate,” she concluded unblushingly, “that I opened the letter!”—as she tore it nervously into a hundred pieces, and threw it into the brook.

One morning, about a fortnight after the Geheimeräthin's visit, Herr Budmar returning from a walk encountered the Oberförsterin upon her road to Woltheim, and with her entered the living-room. She had something of rare importance upon her mind. “Well, Julchen,” said her father, with a smile, “what is it now?”

“I put myself in a position to be criticised and accused of being a gossip,” said the Oberförsterin,

somewhat angered at her father's insinuation, "but nevertheless I must make known to you my errand."

Frau Budmar looked sadly at her daughter. The last fortnight had been hard to bear: Kadden's cold leave-taking of his wife, his neglect in not writing one line to her since his departure, Elizabeth's manifest distress, had shown her that her fears of the past summer had some foundation, and that in spite of the esteem which the young officer apparently entertained for his wife, his love was a thing of the past.

Julchen now informed them of the Bailiff's commission to her husband, to inquire into the views of the family regarding a divorce. She also told them that Kadden had not only ridden and sung with the young ladies, but that he had also spent the entire evening at the ball which was given by the Oberamtmann for the entertainment of the officers.

"That is all mere gossip, Julchen," said her father quietly; "and as for Kadden sending the Bailiff to inquire into our views pending the divorce, it is simply a lie."

"Father, why should it surprise you, when we have all been eye-witnesses to the unhappiness of their married life?"

"Patience, Julchen; in eight days he will return. For your peace of mind, I promise you that I will at once speak to him about the feasibility of a separation. But now we will drop the conversation." The Oberförsterin accordingly held her peace.

Upon reaching her home, she unburdened her heart to her husband. Her father and mother, she complained, were not to be convinced, in spite of all the proofs to the contrary. If she only dared to write and have Elizabeth sent to Berlin until some definite conclusion could be reached!

Upon the following day, several bodies of visiting troops were expected to march through Braunhausen. From all parts of the surrounding neighborhood there streamed hundreds of spectators. When Elizabeth heard that the family from the Oberförsterei were going to drive thither, she asked to accompany them. Good-natured Aunt Julchen gladly consented, pleased to give her niece an opportunity for this little recreation. The Cuirassiers had halted about an hour's distance from the garrison, where the final meeting of the various squadrons was to take place.

The sky was unclouded, the sun shone brightly, but the wind had a sharp edge. Elizabeth felt it keenly; she had not been well for some time, and was still weak and nervous. An irresistible restlessness urged her to Braunhausen; she might, perchance, hear of her husband there. That he had not written to her was a great sorrow, and that even her hopeful grandmother was depressed thereby, was only a confirmation of the fears that haunted her.

The Oberförster drove thither in the great hunting carriage, and beside his wife and Elizabeth, he took the children along. They halted in the

vicinity of the garrison town, and gazed with admiration and delight upon the magnificently uniformed cavalry as they went through their various evolutions.

Elizabeth also looked absently at them. Turning accidentally her gaze towards the parade grounds, she could scarcely credit her sight—was it playing her false? No, there upon the nut-brown steed sat Herr von Kadden motionless, with Adolfine galloping, leaping, curveting and performing all sorts of equestrian feats around him. Colonel von Bonsak and several of the other officers were also near by. Elizabeth closed her eyes. Her husband with Adolfine! She was too weak to think. The realization of the picture that Frau von Bandow had so vividly depicted that evening so long ago was before her. How had she then felt as the light-minded woman jested about her husband's unfaithfulness! How protectingly had he stood by her side, how confidently had he clasped her hand! Was he no longer the same? A dark cloud seemed to pass before her eyes and shut out the hateful vision. She sank back in the carriage pale and mute.

Suddenly and excitedly the Oberförsterin exclaimed, "There is Kadden!" Instinctively she turned to Elizabeth, and as she did so cried out in alarm, "She has fainted! We must drive home instantly."

Her husband without delay turned the horses heads towards Woltheim and asked in a low tone, "Who was the lady with him?"

"Adolfine, for whose sake he is anxious to obtain the divorce," whispered his wife, greatly agitated.

But Elizabeth had not fainted, she was only in a semi-unconscious condition. She heard the words, and opening her eyes, raised herself resolutely, and sat cold and motionless as one who seeing sees not, until Woltheim was reached.

She lay upon the sofa in the family room, while aunt Julchen in the adjoining apartment communicated to the grandparents the unpleasant incident that had caused Elizabeth's illness. Only the facts of the case, however, for she had learned her lesson and was more discreet than usual in her statements. Elizabeth, hearing her voice, called her grandmother to her side and requested her to hand her the little devotional book which lay upon the stand. She did so. Nervously fluttering the leaves, she handed her the open book and said, "Grandmamma, Otto requested me when he was last here to give these lines to aunt Julchen to read."

Frau Budmar executed her commission. The Frau Oberförsterin read, and her face flushed. "What more passing than words? A breath! What very, very few words rest with us. We forget them as soon as spoken. God does not forget them. They do God's work or Satan's work on others. They pass in act; they abide in effect."

After a moment's pause, Herr Budmar said, "But I cannot see why we are not with Elizabeth," and conducted the ladies into the room

where she was lying. He had not made any remark as yet upon the communication made by his daughter. "Now, see, my dear children," he began smilingly on entering the apartment, "what a foolish comedy you have been playing. You *saw* Kadden, yet you did not *go to him*."

Elizabeth raised herself hastily from her reclining position.

"Why did he not come to *us*?" asked the Oberförsterin confusedly.

"Had he seen you he would have come," said the grandfather, "and had he known how you have conducted yourselves, he would have thought you both insane."

Julchen had not a word to say.

When he had spoken these severe words, Herr Budmar rang the bell, summoned a messenger, and when he had written a few lines, despatched him with it upon horseback to Braunhausen. "In all probability Kadden will remain there but a short time," he said, "to attend to business, and will be glad to hear of Elizabeth and the children."

The Oberförsterin left Woltheim very much out of countenance. When Elizabeth was alone with her grandparents, the tears gushed forth, and she complained bitterly over her Aunt Julchen's language.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Herr Budmar, irritably, "we will not talk about it. Do not give yourself any uneasiness, my child, over such a foolish speech. It is not worth a moment's thought."

The messenger returned with the information that Herr von Kadden had called at his house in Braunhausen, and had made special inquiry about a letter which he had sent to his wife, and to which he had received no answer. He had left word that at the farthest, he would be with his family in a week; where he would be in the interval he was not able to say. The report was verbal, and the messenger was at once despatched to the Oberförsterei as a sedative for Aunt Julchen.

The grandfather's wise course and shrewd acceptance of the situation exerted a beneficial effect upon Elizabeth, who became almost immediately happy and composed. She could now see that she must have been for the time insane to have acted so foolishly.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SOME two days after the incidents related in the last chapter, Herr Budmar had a call from his old friend, the doctor, who in the course of conversation, casually mentioned that he was to perform a serious operation in a neighboring village, which was but two hours distant from Woltheim, and although not near the encampment, lay in that direction. Elizabeth, aware that a mission festival was to be held in the village that afternoon, and not wishing to trouble the family at the Oberförsterei, concluded to ask the old doctor if he would permit her to accompany him. He gave a ready assent, and when dinner was over, they started upon their drive, and in due time reached their destination.

Arriving somewhat too early for the meeting, Elizabeth entered the quaint little church, whose door stood invitingly open; although decorated for the festival, it was pervaded by a devotional air. Her restless heart was quieted by the seclusion and peacefulness. She lingered upon the threshold for a time, then wandered into the village burying-ground, which lay near by, "with here and there a grave and the pleasant grass about them all." Musingly she paused to read the half-obliterated inscriptions upon the sunken

tombstones. It was a pleasant day in early autumn. Sunshine and shadow rested upon the little hillocks within the enclosure. The air was mild and balmy, peace and quiet reigned supreme, a quiet that well accorded with the surroundings. Flowers, whose heads had sadly drooped by reason of the heavy hoar-frost of the night, now stood erect in the warm beams of the September sunshine, dreaming of the past happy summer time.

Elizabeth's soul was attuned to the peaceful influences that pervaded the holy restful place, and amid this sacred solitude her heart cried for God—the living God. She waited longingly for the sweet influences that she hoped for in this quiet little village church.

And now groups of worshipers gathered upon the grassy lawn, waiting for the service to begin. Elizabeth, with an irresistible yearning for solitude, hastened across to the opposite side of the road, and in quiet thought paced to and fro under some old oaks, whose locking boughs threw a wide spreading shade, and hid her from the gaze of the passers-by. Stooping now and then through the sunshine and the shade, she plucked the wild flowers that grew along the side of the road, and dreamily entwined the red and yellow blossoms into a tasteful bouquet.

Seeing that the groups were gradually dispersing, with a heart stilled to rest she left her quiet retreat, and hastened to go with those who went up to the house of God. As she did so several ladies

passed out of the gate which led from the garden of the parsonage and went in before her. To her surprise, she found that the church was crowded. With some embarrassment, she paused upon the threshold. In a moment a well-known form stood before her, and a familiar voice bade her welcome. It was Frau Assessor Borne, who, kindly taking her hand, led her to the pastor's pew, where she found already seated the ladies who had passed her as she lingered in the sheltering shade of the old roadside oaks.

Elizabeth's heart was prepared for the reception of the good seed, and with mind intent and heart responsive, she listened closely to the sermon. The hymn chosen accorded so well with her feelings that she felt as though it was sung for her alone. Throughout the remainder of the service the words kept sounding in her ears and echoing in her heart :

"Out of the depths I cry to Thee,
Lord, hear me, I implore Thee,
Bend down Thy gracious ear to me,
Let my prayer come before Thee."

Hot tears fell upon the open book as she strove vainly to hide her emotion.

Near her, half hidden by a pillar, stood her husband, his eyes riveted upon the pale, unhappy face of his wife.

Hardly had the service closed when he hastened through the crowd, and taking his stand by the church door, awaited Elizabeth's appearance.

She was detained for some moments, exchanging salutations with the ladies who sat with her in the pew. As she conversed with them she reached the door, and saw as in a dream her husband standing before her. With one startled look, completely overcome by the unexpectedness of the meeting, she cried joyously, "Oh, Otto, you here?" and at the same time grasped his outstretched hand, her countenance radiant with delight.

Holding her hands in a firm, warm clasp, he turned to the ladies, and in explanation said that his regiment was quartered near by, that he had taken advantage of a few hours' leisure to ride to the village, and thus most unexpectedly had met with his wife.

Hastily excusing himself upon the plea of want of time, he declined for himself and wife the hospitalities extended to them, and at once led Elizabeth to the shade of the oaks.

Herr von Kadden had learned at the inn from the doctor's coachman that his wife had accompanied his master to the village, and was now in the church. The man also volunteered the information that as soon as the exercises were over they expected to drive back to Woltheim. Longing for a few moments' conversation with his wife, Kadden proposed that they should walk part of the way, and that the doctor could overtake them upon the road.

Still clasping her hand, Kadden inquired with gentle reproach, "Why did you not write to me, Elizabeth?"

"I did not know where to address you," was the ready, tremulous reply.

"Did you not receive my letter?" he inquired.

Elizabeth shook her head, unable to trust herself to speak. The pain which she had suffered over his fancied neglect was plainly to be read in her countenance.

"I cannot understand it," said her husband. He then explained when and where he had written, and that he had of course expected to receive an answer. *That* she had already been apprised of by the messenger who had been despatched to Braunhausen. She told him how comforting it had been to her to hear of him, and that she had at that time resolved that she would bear bravely his enforced absence.

As his wife spoke, a great change passed over his grave face. His dark eyes gazed tenderly upon her, and his heart throbbed with the old-time bliss. He knew not what to say, where or how to begin, the sense that their parting was so near oppressed him. All too soon the doctor's carriage hove in sight.

"Elizabeth," said her husband, hastily mastering his emotion, "I will see you in Braunhausen day after to-morrow."

"Shall I come and meet you, Otto?" she asked with some hesitation, yet with sweet and artless tenderness.

"Yes, do so. I will take the short cut by the rocks."

"I will be sure to be there," she replied, smiling through her tears.

For a few moments they stood silently side by side. Then Herr von Kadden, taking a tiny oak twig from his buttonhole, handed it to Elizabeth, removing at the same time with trembling hands the faded flowers that drooped upon her breast. Her face flushed with pleasure, as, with eyes beautiful in their appealing love, she fastened the withered nosegay where the twig had rested. Kissing her tenderly upon the forehead, he led her to the carriage.

The doctor having arrived at the suburbs of Woltheim, and wishing to make a professional call, Elizabeth alighted in the vicinity of the Oberförsterei, near to the great oak wood. Gladly would she have passed the house unobserved, for she longed to be with her children, and without restraint pour out her joy. Her heart was as light as in the early days of her wedded love. She saw her husband's dear image, the dearest by far in all the world to her. She saw the dark, blue eyes as they had gazed into hers when he took the flowers from her breast; the same dear eyes which had beamed upon her so long ago in the crowded streets of Berlin, when he gave her the bunch of violets. She heard the deep thrilling voice, and lived anew in the joy of his presence.

Hurriedly she tried to pass by the wooden fence which bounded the kitchen garden of the Oberförsterei; but she could not escape the keen, watch-

ful eyes of her Aunt Julchen, who, with her daughter, the slender Marie, was busily engaged in gathering the late beans, which still hung upon the vines, soon to be killed by the frosts of early autumn. The more readily to accomplish the work, they were mounted upon chairs, and their swaying to and fro with the motion of the tall poles was grotesque in the extreme. From this point of vantage, Aunt Julchen quickly espied the shrinking form of Elizabeth, and dismounting in haste, dragged her chair up to the high board fence, and standing upon it, leaned over, extending her hand in greeting, and saying pleasantly, "You have just returned from the mission festival."

"Yes, aunt," returned Elizabeth, and then added simply, "and whom do you think I met there? Otto—my husband." The expression that accompanied these words could not be misunderstood. "Day after to-morrow his regiment returns to Braunhausen," continued the young wife, with a glad smile; and bidding a hurried adieu, she hastened upon her way, affording no opportunity for further conversation, anxious also to reach home, realizing profoundly that in the short interval since she left Woltheim a new life had begun for her.

When she reached the cherry avenue, she saw her grandparents and her Uncle Charles advancing to meet her. The latter smiled, well pleased to see his favorite niece return. Her grandfather could

scarcely repress an exclamation of surprise as he saw Elizabeth approaching, with light, elastic step, her face radiant with delight, and her beautiful eyes lighted up with her great joy.

"Whom think you I have met?" she cried out as she drew near; and although she smiled brightly it was through glistening tears.

"I think I can guess," said her grandfather, "of course it was Otto."

"Yes, Otto was there," she responded, then added ingenuously, "we were delighted to meet each other—so unexpectedly too! and day after tomorrow he will be here!"

"I suppose then he will not give his consent to your proposed visit to Berlin," said her grandfather, with assumed gravity.

"Nonsense," cried Elizabeth, with the old-time impetuosity. Johanna now advanced with the children, and after a loving greeting to them, the young wife described more minutely her meeting with her husband, and delivered to her grandparents the many messages with which she was charged.

The old doctor carried excitement into the Oberförsterei, where he had tarried awhile upon his return. He communicated with some exaggerated flourishes the meeting between Elizabeth and her husband. The unhappiness and the expected separation of the young pair was common talk in Braunhausen. Various and conflicting were the rumors that had been floating around among the

different branches of the family, and much unprofitable gossip had been indulged in. As the doctor told of the unexpected meeting between the much-talked-of pair, Aunt Julchen sighed ominously. Provoked by her significant look and long-drawn sigh, the irate old man assured her that no bridal pair were ever more happy than they, "and at parting," said he, "they exchanged flowers as though they were lovers of a day."

"Gossip," exclaimed the Oberförster, "nothing but gossip. I have told my wife that time and time again."

The following day was without sunshine, the air was cold and raw, but Elizabeth was too restless to remain indoors. An irresistible craving for action drove her without. With quick steps she hastened up the height, from which she could look down upon the towers of Braunhausen. Gloomy, gray clouds chased each other athwart the sky in wild confusion. Longingly she directed her gaze towards the distant oaks upon the further side of the town. "To-morrow," she murmured, "to-morrow at this hour I will await his coming." Upon this old trysting place she would gather courage for the meeting. She had resolved that she would tell her husband without reserve all of the grief and all of the love with which her heart was overcharged. She would ask his forgiveness for the sorrow that her perversity had caused him, and she would plead for the continuance of his love. Sometimes she almost doubted whether she

had not forfeited it. "He may answer," she sighed, and a pang accompanied the thought, "'I will respect and protect you as my wife, but I cannot renew the sunshine and the flowers of our first love.' Should he give me such a reply I will accept it, and love him still."

The following afternoon she sat again upon the fir mount overlooking Braunhausen. It was still more stormy than the day before; the wind blew hard from the southwest, the air was keen and cold, heavy gusts of wind swept mercilessly around her; but she thought not of the weather, her whole soul was filled with the thought of their meeting. A long time she sat there, buried in thought, until at last, chilled to the heart, she sought a temporary shelter among the dark firs, pacing impatiently to and fro, striving to still her palpitating heart. Soon she left her covert and stood upon the summit. Longingly and intently she gazed upon the dim distant spires. She knew not what she feared. As she looked she noticed a rift in the dark mass of clouds, and the "gloom of the strongly-contrasted shadows gradually kindled the golden light into a brilliant glow." Although the day was far spent, the sun was still shining. She shuddered with the cold; the loneliness of the place was oppressive—when suddenly from out of the group of alders her husband advanced towards her.

Weary and nervous with the strain of the long, cold vigil and with the strength of her pent-up emotions, she stood rooted to the spot, her heart

throbbing tumultuously. With an effort she gathered courage, and hastened to meet him. How should she begin? What would he think of her confession? Her husband pressed her to his heart, enfolding her in a loving embrace. Gently she released herself, and taking the hand upon which the betrothal ring glittered—the hand that was once raised threateningly against her—she raised it to her lips, and with a low sob tenderly kissed it. Her husband could not speak; unwonted tears rose to his eyes. Only too well did he understand what her humble, loving heart would say.

In silence he led her to their trysting-place, and seated her upon the rock. For some moments neither of them spoke, then, raising her bowed head, Elizabeth looked long and wistfully into his face. "Tell me what you will, my wife," he said, "keep nothing from me."

Thus encouraged, Elizabeth poured out her overburdened heart; she told him of the joys and of the sorrows of the past eventful year. Her husband's emotion as he listened almost overwhelmed him. He knew not what affected him the most. "Otto," she continued, "I cannot understand why you ever could have loved me, but I accept your love as a gift, a gracious gift from God. Henceforth I commit it into His holy keeping, knowing that He will keep it for me to the end."

"Her husband assured her over and over again of his deep affection. "But, Elizabeth," he said, "I know not how you can forgive my barbarity; how can you forget the past?"

For answer she bent her head, again kissed the offending hand, and when he attempted to speak she laid her fingers lightly upon his lips, and with some of the old-time wilfulness in her tone said with a bright smile, "Otto, not one word!"

Upon this self-same spot had the grandparents kept tryst many long years ago. Elizabeth's proud heart was humbled at last, and the words spoken by the sweet, gracious bride of the long past was now echoing sweetly in her heart: "And he shall be thy lord."

Cheered they arose and started to meet the dear ones in the old home. They were at last sensible of the storm of keen icy-wind that was raging around them. Drawing Elizabeth's wrap closely about her, her husband hastened her steps down the hill.

Upon the old carved sofa, beneath the great picture in the heavy gilded frame, sat Herr von Budmar, on each side a grandchild, his hand meanwhile protectingly laid upon little Marie's crown of gold. Both the little ones sat sedately in the subdued twilight of the apartment, gazing dreamily into the open fire, whose bright red glow illumined with a halo their sweet young faces.

Frau Budmar, who could no longer repress her anxiety, stood by the window gazing anxiously out into the gray eventide. How silent it was within the old room; not a sound to break the stillness save the soft singing of the kettle upon the hearth.

"Here they come," exclaimed Frau Budinar, with a deep sigh of relief as she left the window and advanced to greet the welcome guest.

The door of the garden-room closed, and in a moment Elizabeth and her husband entered the apartment. After an affectionate embrace, Kadden bending his stately form, and taking the dear old lady's hand in his, said simply as a child, "Trust me again with your grand-daughter, and give us your blessing, and, so help me God, I will do better in the future than I have done in the past."

Some moments later he seated himself beside the venerable pair, with both his children upon his lap, Elizabeth bringing a foot-stool and seating herself in front of the happy group, where she could look into the dark-blue eyes, which ever and anon rested so lovingly upon her; the past was forgotten.

While they talked Kadden drank eagerly several cups of hot tea. Elizabeth, who had been for some while regarding him with anxiety, noticed the deep, dark shadows under his eyes, and the dry cough that seemed to rack his frame. Taking his hand in both of hers, she found that it was cold as ice.

"Otto, my husband," she exclaimed in alarm, "you are not well."

"I do not feel very well," he replied; "ever since yesterday I have suffered from a pain in my chest, particularly when I cough." He had found it so much more uncomfortable to ride he added, that he had walked, though with difficulty, the greater part of the way to Braunhausen.

Elizabeth would not rest until her husband gave her permission to send for the doctor. He thought that she was unnecessarily alarmed, but the grandparents were upon her side, and a messenger was immediately despatched for him. Suddenly he shivered and was seized with a heavy chill.

The doctor was not long in coming, and advised that they should drive at once to Braunhausen in a close carriage, unless they wished to be detained at Woltheim for an indefinite length of time. Kadden quickly accepted the first alternative, and immediate preparations were made for their departure.

Elizabeth, although anxious, was too happy to be despondent; she could be his nurse and companion, and they would be together in their dear old home.

The groom, who had led his master's horse to Woltheim, was immediately despatched to Braunhausen with instructions to have a room instantly prepared for the reception of the sick man. On their arrival the physician was again summoned, and the patient lay upon the sofa still clad in his traveling costume. Elizabeth, as she looked around upon the unhomelike air of the room, felt a sharp pang of self-reproach.

Her husband had been quietly observing her, and he now called her to his side and said, "Elizabeth, do you remember the morning after poor Charlotte's death we prayed that God might lead us to Himself in His own way, whether through

sunshine or through storm? The remembrance of the past ought only to call forth our gratitude. I keep ever in mind that you are dearer to me than ever. This sickness will be good for us both. I shall be glad to withdraw for a season from the world and from worldly society. May God strengthen us !"

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of the doctor. Kadden's wish to withdraw from the world was fully gratified. The doctor pronounced his malady pneumonia, and told Elizabeth that he feared her husband would have a hard struggle for life.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

NEXT morning Stottenheim, anxious and despondent, called at the Colonel's. He had just met the doctor, who in passing had hurriedly informed him of his friend Kadden's dangerous illness. He asked the ladies if they had heard anything of it. They had not, and accounted for their ignorance of the fact by the absence of the Colonel the day before.

"The Fates have been long pursuing him relentlessly," said the wordy Lieutenant, "and now the poor fellow lies sick, without any attention or comfort. I must go and give his servant some directions as to taking proper care of him. I am convinced that this sickness is the result of severe mental strain.

"Why has he permitted himself to drag on such a miserable existence? He could have no difficulty in freeing himself from his matrimonial fetters, if he wished to be free. For my part, I cannot understand it," said the Colonel's wife. "He is by nature so manly, so resolute. Why does he not *act?*"

Adolfine meanwhile sat with bowed head, an attentive though silent auditor, her eyes fixed upon her embroidery.

"My dear lady," began Stottenheim, "let me

assure you that this affair is no trifle to Kadden. I confess that were I in his place I too would hesitate to bring matters to a climax. The views entertained by his wife's family are, as is well known, diametrically opposed to the prevailing custom ; on the other hand, an unhappy future stares him in the face. Fräü Kadden's views and interests are, in a word, not in any respect identical with his. From this you may imagine the mental tribulations through which the poor fellow has passed."

"For my part," said Cäcilie, "I do not believe that Herr von Kadden will ever consent to a divorce."

"Well—no—not unless there was—well unless there was—*something* to turn the scale," returned Stottenheim, in a mysteriously significant tone.

"What do you mean, *what* could turn the scale," inquired Frau Bonsak, with some curiosity.

"I know *all* about it, but it would not be proper for me to mention it," said the Lieutenant, shrugging his shoulders.

His mysterious manner still further excited the curiosity of his auditors. But Stottenheim was not hard hearted, he would willingly gratify the ladies; besides, he desired nothing better than to tell. Was he not in a confidential circle? "I greatly fear," he continued in a low tone, "that there is an attachment in the case, and that the object of it *is not his wife*."

"Not his wife!" echoed the ladies in incredulous wonder. Adolfine alone kept resolutely silent.

"You have no conception of the rapture with which he speaks of his sojourn in Wangeroge," continued the Lieutenant, "of the charming society he met with there. *Two* ladies appear to be regarded by him with especial favor, he speaks of them in tones of exaggerated admiration. 'One a lovely young woman and the other a blooming maiden of only sixteen summers—which of the two is *the one* I have not been able to find out, but I can assure you that his mind is greatly exercised.'"

"Most extraordinary!" ejaculated the Colonel's wife with a gentle smile.

"I have been quite disquieted over it myself," he continued, "think of what *might* be! The last afternoon that our regiment was in quarters—by the way, a most charming afternoon—Kadden absented himself for several hours. We spent the evening together, and he appeared to me as one in a dream, his attention seemingly absorbed by a bouquet of wild flowers which he held in his hand all the time.

"I can't comprehend," said Adolfine scornfully, with a bitter smile upon her lips, "why you should all rack your brains to discover the object of Herr von Kadden's affection. *The man is in love with his wife, that is all there is about it.*"

A simultaneous laugh was the only answer. Adolfine threw a defiant look around the circle. "Did you ever know Herr von Kadden to do what was expected of him?" she asked with fierce em-

phasis. "On the contrary, he amuses himself whenever he has the opportunity."

Adolfine's headlong words were regarded as eminently ridiculous, and our lieutenant took a hasty departure, ostensibly to look after the comfort of his deserted friend.

Upon entering the ante-room of Herr von Kadden's dwelling, and meeting the groom, he anxiously inquired, "How is your master?"

"He is very ill," replied the man in a low tone.

"Has he proper attendance?" asked Stottenheim. "Which room does he occupy?"

"By the doctor's orders his bed has been removed into the largest and most airy room in the house," returned the groom, indicating at the same time by a gesture the adjoining apartment. "I waited upon him last night."

Stottenheim, with a nod of approval, now interrupted the worthy fellow's talk, and quietly opened the door of the sick man's room. He stood for a moment rooted to the spot in painful embarrassment. There lay his sick friend asleep, his head resting upon a pillow, no whiter than the face that lay upon it. On a footstool by the side of the bed sat Elizabeth in a light sleep, her head resting lovingly upon her husband's hand, which lay weak and passive by his side. No sooner had the Lieutenant in part recovered from his surprise, than he hurriedly retreated, closing the door noiselessly behind him, in order to regain his self-possession before making his presence known.

Elizabeth, aroused from her light slumber, moved silently but quickly across the room, and opening the door, stood before the still abashed Stottenheim. Her lovely, earnest face lighted up with pleased surprise as she bade him enter. Kadden unclosed his heavy eyes, and when his comrade approached his bed and inquired how he was feeling, answered with husky voice and labored breathing, "I feel better to-day."

"I have been aware for some time that you were anything but well, my friend."

"Yes, I was sick with longing for my wife," he said with a tender smile as he laid his hand gently upon Elizabeth's.

"Certainly—O yes—indubitably," nervously stammered the disconcerted friend.

"Stottenheim," said the sick man, "you will be doing me a great favor if you will inquire at the post for a letter addressed to my wife—entrusted by me to Bailiff Weibert."

"Please don't talk," pleaded Elizabeth.

At this moment the physician entered the room, looked inquiringly at the Lieutenant and said, "I see that I must play the rôle of the ill-natured doctor and forbid all visits for the present."

The young man appreciating the situation, bowed, and warmly pressing the hand of his friend, withdrew.

Upon finding himself outside of the house, Stottenheim hastened back to the Colonel's. Nothing in all the course of his life had ever taken the wind

out of his sails like the present occurrence. He had a soft heart, and yet he hardly knew whether to be glad or sorry at the unexpected turn affairs had taken. At all hazards, however, speak he must. He hastened to re-visit the ladies whom he found still in conclave, busily engaged in talking over the scandal that he had that morning set in motion. The Colonel was present.

"I wonder what you will say to what I have *now* to communicate," began the young man eagerly, forgetful for the moment of his habitual deferential politeness; "Fräulein Adolfine was right in her conjecture."

The blood rushed in a torrent to the young girl's cheeks, as she raised her eyes and gazed boldly around.

"Right in what? Explain yourself," said the Colonel.

"Kadden," said Stottenheim in reply, "has been leading us all by the nose." He then described graphically the scene of which he had been the unobserved eye witness. "The picture," he added, "was truly pathetic, and when he laid his hand upon that of Frau Kadden and said in trembling, tender tones, 'I was sick with longing for my wife,' it was more than even *I* could bear unmoved. And then the young Frau looked so lovely, so innocent, and so coy—just as she did that day when she paid her first visit to you with her grandparents."

"She is a beautiful, lovely creature," said Cäcilie, warmly.

"But I cannot understand for my part how such scandalous reports were circulated," said the Colonel, angrily.

"High Bailiff Wiebert is very culpable," rejoined Stottenheim; "now this news from Wangeroge" . .

"The blooming maiden of sixteen summers," interrupted Adolfine, with infinite sarcasm in her tone as she repeated the words of the discomfited Lieutenant.

"My fair lady," returned the officer with unwonted rudeness, "we none of us have anything to congratulate ourselves upon over this affair, but we may all rejoice that it has terminated so happily."

"Depend upon it," said the Colonel, emphatically, "there was *some* foundation for these reports."

"I know that Kadden was very much depressed during the time of his wife's illness," said Stottenheim, irrelevantly.

"So then he didn't keep silent from shame or because of embarrassment," said Adolfine, scornfully.

Stottenheim moved uneasily, irritated by her reminders and by the ill-nature which evidently prompted her observations, but he could not enter a protest, for she was but repeating his own thoughtless words.

"I for my part," said Cäcilie "cannot comprehend why you did not tell your friend of the reports which were in circulation about him."

"I *did* speak with him upon the subject, but

Kadden is of an exceptionally reticent and haughty nature. His invariable reply to all of my communications was, 'The world is mistaken.' It is however clear to me now," he added, lapsing into his habitual chit-chat, "that he took delight in leading us astray. He will of course embrace the first opportunity to inveigh against the world and its friendship."

"He will assuredly have good reason for doing so, for each one of our circle has seemed to take pleasure in talking over this scandal, rolling it as a sweet morsel under the tongue," said Cäcilie with emphasis.

"No, no," responded the Lieutenant, "I do not agree with you there. I did not *enjoy* it, I assure you."

"We will call it zeal then, if *pleasure* offend you," returned Cäcilie.

"I have no objection to your amendment," said Stottenheim graciously.

"I pray you, children," interposed the Colonel, "say no more on this subject, and I would still further advise you to give no heed to anything that may be said to you about it. Our wiser course is to ignore the scandal totally. You know the proverb."

"Certainly," said Stottenheim, with ready assent, "one must not talk too much, one is naturally led to say many things for which one 'cannot give chapter and verse.' For this reason I have come to *you*. But I pray you excuse me, I must hasten

to the post to make inquiry after a lost letter of Kadden's which was written to his wife, the finding of which seems to be of vital importance to the poor fellow."

"A letter to whom?" asked the Colonel.

"A letter to his wife," repeated Stottenheim, "which has disappeared either by the carelessness of the post or of Bailiff Wiebert, into whose hands the letter was entrusted. Perchance you know something about it," he said ingenuously, turning to Adolfine.

"What! I?" stammered Adolfine, as the tell-tale blood rushed in a torrent to her face.

"I only meant," said Stottenheim innocently, "that you might happen to know because you remained there longer than the rest of us. I recollect positively that Kadden wrote a letter that day, and I saw him hand it to the Bailiff."

Adolfine dared not raise her eyes, but answered in a low voice, while her color became deeper and still deeper, "That is possible."

Every eye was now fixed upon her. Her manner was so peculiar that startling conjectures presented themselves to each member of the party. A luminous gleam seemed to be thrown upon past events. Stottenheim had fallen upon his feet for once. He knew Adolfine thoroughly and took in the situation. "Young ladies," he said, as he fixed his eyes keenly upon her, "are sometimes audacious, always curious. Perhaps *you* read that letter and found out with whom Kadden was in love."

"Beyond a doubt that naughty child has read the letter," exclaimed her elder sister with a laugh.

"Yes, I *did* read the letter," said Adolfine boldly, "it fell into my hands by accident. We can, from henceforth and forever," she coolly continued, "consign to oblivion the blooming, sixteen year old maiden." Her parents and sisters were amused at her audacity—all but Cäcilie.

"I frankly confess that I was badly mistaken," said Stottenheim with an effort at stateliness in his tone. Evidently he did not enjoy Adolfine's malicious enjoyment of his discomfiture.

"To err is human," interposed the Colonel, "there is but one course left for us to pursue, and that is to ignore the entire affair."

In spite of the inclement weather, as soon as the Colonel had dined he hastened to interview Bailiff Wiebert, advising him to communicate with the Oberförster, adding that further investigation as to the letter was superfluous, as its whereabouts had been ascertained.

The Oberamtmann was at first somewhat surprised at this unceremonious dismissal of the subject, when a sudden light was thrown upon it, as he called to mind the rumors that had come from Wangeroge. The Colonel took this opportunity to assure him emphatically that he for one had never given credence to any of these mischievous reports.

And now the wind veered into a new quarter. The sensational scandal which had been the ex-

citing cause of so many conjectures, so much gossip, and such varied and frequent glimpses into family history, all reported and repeated with infinite relish, came to an abrupt ending. Now that the wind had changed, it was found that no one could give any explanation of his statements, and strange to say, it was even asserted with confidence that no one had given the least credence to the reports. The Wangeroge scandal sank into the oblivion it merited. Fraulein Amelie Keller voiced the sentiment of the little world of Braunhausen when she asserted that the young officer and his charming wife were among the most desirable and attractive of her acquaintances, and her cordially expressed wish that they would soon be able to mingle in their society as of yore met with a unanimous endorsement.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

SEVERAL weeks had passed, during which interval Elizabeth had been occasionally despondent, though she relied upon the physician's assurance that there was no cause for alarm. She was happy in the pleasure of being her husband's nurse and companion, and in devising everything that lay within her power for his comfort. Her mother had written immediately upon hearing of her husband's illness and proffered her services, and her Aunt Julchen also had kindly offered her aid; but all tenders of assistance were gratefully declined, as Elizabeth was conscious that the sick man wished no other attention than hers. She was too thoroughly absorbed to leave room for dejection or alarm. The children also needed no other attendance than that of their faithful nurse Johanna, and their being near at hand was a great comfort as well as enjoyment to Elizabeth.

One quiet day followed another. Elizabeth lived in the darkened room, listening to the monotonous ticking of the clock and to the sound of "its muffled chimes, as hour after hour passed by." The weary waiting was interrupted only as she rose to administer medicine or food to the sick man, who would ever and anon give her a faint look of gratitude and satisfaction to see her by his side. Her

loving heart would then glow with thankfulness to God for His great mercy in permitting her to wait upon him. Her usual seat was a foot stool by the side of the bed. Here she listened with a sad and anxious heart to the dear sleeper's heavy breathing; and sometimes, exhausted by her long and weary vigil, she would lean her tired head upon the pillow, on which occasions her husband's hand would be feebly extended, and rest lovingly upon her head. For hours she would remain in this position so as not to disturb the sleeper. Sometimes she would fall into a light slumber, and so the hours wore on from twilight to early dawn and from dawn to twilight.

But the gradual recovery which was so fondly hoped for after the disease had been subdued was retarded from day to day. To her great grief, Elizabeth noticed that her husband suffered from a marked want of vitality. He slept most of the time, or lay with closed eyes, apparently suffering only from extreme weakness. The physician, who had at first ascribed this exhaustion to the natural result of the disease, was now convinced that it might possibly prove fatal to the patient. He refrained, however, from mentioning it to Elizabeth, but wrote at once to Herr Budmar, suggesting some better method for nursing the patient.

Herr Budmar and his wife drove to Braunhausen that same afternoon, and found Elizabeth sad and anxious, who accepted her grandmother's proposal to stay with her with gratitude and an outburst of

tears. She remained for some time in the ante-room conversing with her dear guest, for, as she sadly said, her husband slept most of the time, and required but little attention, that he seemed to her to be on the brink of a decline. While they were talking, to her surprise, Elizabeth heard her name called by him, and hastening to his side, she bent over him and spoke to him in low, loving tones. Frau Budmar followed her granddaughter into the sick-room. It was the first time she had seen the young man during his illness. He recognized her at once, and a ray of interest lighted up his languid eye, as he feebly returned her greeting. At the suggestion of Frau Budmar, Stottenheim, who had repeatedly begged that he might share in nursing his sick friend, was permitted to do so. Kadden was accustomed to him, and he could come and go without disturbing either the patient or Elizabeth.

Three more weeks had passed away—heavy, anxious weeks—when one morning as Elizabeth was talking with Frau Budmar in the adjoining room, she heard a low, indistinct sound and knew that the loved sleeper had awakened. As she approached the bed Stottenheim left his place by his friend's side and stepped softly to the window. The first snow flakes were whirling through the air in the heavy gusts of a gloomy November storm. The weather was depressing and the once gay and heedless Lieutenant felt as if a heavy weight lay upon his breast. He saw no hope for his friend, no comfort for the stricken wife.

Suddenly Kadden opened his heavy eyelids, and gazed about him for a moment; a slightly startled expression passed over his face, then his eyes rested upon his wife who was kneeling by the side of the bed. "Elizabeth," he said in a weak voice, "read me the hymn that they sang in the village church, that pleasant summer day." She rose, got the book, and began to read. He feebly clasped her hand in his as he listened, but Elizabeth could not continue for weeping. Stroking her brow with his thin emaciated hand, he whispered with the utmost tenderness "Do not despair, trust in God,"—then after a moment's pause he added, "Elizabeth, I ask you again to forgive my cruel treatment of you, although I am unable to remember all the wrong I have done, or to atone for it. "His wife was too deeply moved to speak; bending down her head she kissed his hand fervently. "The Lord will comfort you," he continued with a heavy sigh, "you have experienced to your sorrow, my dear wife, that there is no dependence to be put in mortal man." Covering his face with his hands, he wept bitterly. Elizabeth in an agony of emotion, bent caressingly over him, kissed his colorless lips and besought him not to grieve, that they were both safe beneath the shadow of the Almighty's wings, and that they both would try to say, "Thy will be done." By degrees his sobs subsided, and wearily closing his eyes he soon sank into an exhausted sleep.

While her husband slumbered Elizabeth entered

the adjoining apartment, and implored her grandmother to permit her, for at least that one night, to watch alone by his bed. "I have rested," she said, "so it can do me no harm; but even should it, it is my very heart's desire to do so." Although contrary to the doctor's orders, Frau Budmar reluctantly consented. Stottenheim was accordingly discharged from duty and told that Elizabeth would watch by the sick bed. As the twilight deepened into darkness, and the night into the solemn stillness of midnight, she found herself alone in the solemn hush of the sick chamber. She felt as though she stood with her beloved one quite upon the borders of heaven, her whole soul absorbed in prayer. She knew not how it might be in the future, but *now* she felt calmly resigned to the will of God. An indescribable peace fell upon her, her spirit prostrated itself as though communing in the very audience chamber of God Himself. In childlike submission she breathed, "Here am I, Lord, do with me as Thou wilt."

She listened to the low breathing, and moved noiselessly as she handed the medicine and nourishment which her husband passively received at her hands. All was done without even a shade of unhappiness or disquiet in her heart.

Once only he opened his eyes, and said in his natural voice, "Elizabeth, are you still here?"

"I will not leave you, Otto," she quietly replied.

A faint smile lighted up his face as he closed

his eyes contentedly, her presence being now all that he desired on earth.

Another week had elapsed, and the loving grandparents had meanwhile returned to Woltheim. The doctor expected this day to be the crisis of the disease. Elizabeth sat listening to the low chime of the clock, telling ever and anon that another hour had passed away, "it almost seemed the audible footsteps of coming death." Occasionally during her solitary, silent vigil the waves of grief would rise, but the Lord held her safely above the billows, and in an ecstatic, dreamy state of exaltation, she heeded not the flight of time.

The invalid still peacefully slumbered, and Elizabeth still watched even to the dawn of day. "Thou, Lord, canst create life from death," she breathed trustingly, raising her eyes and heart to heaven in importunate supplication, with ever increasing earnestness, until the dimness of early dawn had brightened into the light of morning. She would not let Him go until He blessed her. Suddenly a beam of hope, so clear so bright, so intense, as though from the radiance of the upper world, penetrated her inmost being. With faith undoubting she answered, "Lord, my resignation is from Thee, my hope also comes from Thee; as such I accept it, and for Thy great mercy toward me I henceforth dedicate myself to Thy service. Day and night I will wait upon Thee, until with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, I will love and praise Thee throughout eternity."

As the last words left her lips her husband unclosed his eyes. Taking his wife's hand in his, he held it gently as he said, "I was in Wangeroge and saw the glorious wide sea and heard the music of its waves." Elizabeth gave a sweet, comprehending smile. It was the Holy Spirit, she thought, bringing healing on His wings, "I have," he continued in a low voice, "I have so long, I know not how long, been plunged in deep darkness. I could not even fancy how the blessed sunshine looked. I was hemmed in by steep and lofty mountains, from which I could not escape. They drew nearer and nearer until I feared they would crush me to death. Oh! I have struggled so long. I tried with all my strength to shake off the haunting illusion, but in vain. With recurring and with ever increasing vividness it presented itself to me. Suddenly I saw the wide refreshing sea, so cool, so life-giving, and the blessed sunshine gleamed and sparkled brightly over the wide expanse of waters." Elizabeth, clasping his dear hand still closer, smiled through a mist of tears.

"Do not fear, my beloved," he continued after a moment's pause. "I too thought that I was to die, and hoped that through my death I might preach to others; but now—*now* by the mercy of God, I expect to live, and through my life proclaim His wonderful grace. And now you must rest," he said tenderly, "I will close my eyes and look upon the open sea and listen to the music of its waves, and bask in the blessed sunshine and sleep, sleep, for I am very tired."

Elizabeth administered some refreshment and then noiselessly withdrew, and with a light heart, freed from care, after all these long, weary, waiting weeks, lay down in peace and slept.

After a short slumber she arose, and going softly into the sick chamber, found her husband sleeping peacefully for the first time in all these weary weeks. With light step and still lighter heart, Elizabeth went into the nursery. The children were awake and alone. Lovingly the young mother bent over Frederick's bed. "My dear son," she said joyously, "let us give thanks to the dear God for giving back to us your dear papa." Then gently lifting the little Marie from her bed and taking both children upon her lap, she pressed them to her heart, and when she had folded their little hands said simply, "I thank Thee, O loving Father, and my children thank Thee."

"Except ye become as little children ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."

At this moment the nurse came into the room. "Johanna," she said, "you must join us in giving thanks, for your sick master is better."

"Better, truly better?" cried the good, faithful servant, sinking into a chair, her knees trembling in her excitement. "O, you dear children," she cried, "the Lord has not forgotten you." Elizabeth left the nursery, and, hastening down the steps, hurriedly crossed the court-yard, the snow-flakes whirling round about her, falling softly on the white fleecy carpet as she ran; but they hin-

dered her not. Going to the stable where Wilhelm was grooming his master's horse, she called out joyously to the trusty servant, "I came to tell you that your dear master will recover—through the mercy of God."

The good-hearted fellow, who for many an anxious day and many a weary night had waited in the sick chamber, stopped his work as he exclaimed, the tears streaming down his weather-beaten cheeks the while, "Merciful God, how good of Thee!"

"Elizabeth could not rest until she had run into the stall, where, caressingly stroking the glossy brown mane, she gazed into the intelligent eyes of the beautiful creature and whispered, "And you too must rejoice with me, for you shall carry your loved cuirassier again."

The doctor came soon after, accompanied by Stottenheim. Elizabeth met them in the ante-room. Her lovely eyes sparkled with pleasure. She had forgotten in her joy that a skeptical old doctor stood before her. "My husband is better," she cried, "I *knew* that the Lord would help, and He *has*."

"But the doctor has a little to say about that," he responded, with a light laugh.

"Yes, but you will have to rejoice with me," said Elizabeth.

"But remember, Frau Kadden, that we are not over the mountain yet," said the old doctor, shaking his head doubtfully.

"But the Lord will continue to help," said the young wife, with such a beautiful radiance of hope animating her lovely face that the old man experienced for the moment a certain æsthetical emotion as he gazed, and could not find it in his heart to say aught that would abate the fervor of her enthusiastic faith. Entering the sick-room, he found his patient in a tranquil sleep. Bending over him, he felt his pulse. Then, stepping back in some surprise, he said, "The pulse is regular, the skin cool and moist."

At this moment, Kadden opened his eyes, looked about him, and said, "I have been asleep." Turning to his wife, he feebly put out his hand as she kneeled by his side. She had not needed the testimony of the physician to assure her, yet her husband's words were a great joy.

The doctor recommended increased care and watchfulness, to which Elizabeth assented with a ready smile.

"But for a time other care than thine," interposed Kadden, tenderly pressing his wife's hand; "and my kind friend Stottenheim, too, shall take a rest," he continued, extending his hand gratefully toward him.

Both nurses would have entered protest, but the doctor concurred in his patient's wishes, saying, "The groom can sleep in his Master's room; there will no longer be a necessity for any one to sit up. Wilhelm can administer the medicine and nourishment."

Elizabeth accompanied the gentlemen as they withdrew to the next room, "I thank you, doctor," she said simply as a child, "for the kindness you have shown us and for your friendly attention. Thank God for having blessed your ministration."

The old man smiled and said, "Yes, Kadden's life hung by a thread."

"But the Lord held that thread in His hand," said Elizabeth. "How comforting that thought must be to a physician."

The doctor courteously inclined his head as Elizabeth left the room.

"A beautiful faith," said Stottenheim, as he found himself alone on the steps with the doctor. "What I have experienced in that room for the last few weeks no pen can describe."

"The young wife is a little enthusiastic," said the old man with a smile.

"Enthusiasm is her great characteristic," returned Stottenheim. The two gentlemen now separated, and the Lieutenant hastened without further delay to Colonel von Bonsak's. There was one there to whom he longed to communicate the good news—Cäcilie.

Stottenheim found the family together, and eagerly informed them that Kadden was pronounced out of danger. He had brought them daily reports. Upon one occasion, when speaking of Frau von Kadden's wonderful submission to the will of God, Adolfine had impulsively said that if Elizabeth could tranquilly stand by her husband's death-bed,

she could not love him; and Stottenheim seized the opportunity to say as he turned toward the young girl, "Could you but see the great joy and thankfulness of that dear wife, you would not say she does not love her husband."

"It would be impossible for me unmoved to see any one I loved die."

"For this very reason I am fully persuaded that the peace which she experienced is beyond all reason," said Stottenheim, with solemnity, "incomprehensible as it is to me, and contrary to all that I have hitherto thought reasonable."

"It is the miracle of faith," said Cäcilie fervently.

"Yes," returned Stottenheim, "our pastor said lately that faith works miracles, as our Lord Christ Himself did when he was upon earth. I can now see what he meant by it."

"Merciful Heaven!" thought the Colonel, "has this fellow commenced it too." However, he only said, "My dear Stottenheim, you have been passing through an experience; your nerves are out of order."

"That is very likely the case," returned Stottenheim, good-naturedly, "but what I have seen and heard in that sick room . . . I will never dare again to lay unholy hands on Kadden's faith."

"He is a freeman," said the Colonel. "He is at liberty to think what he pleases. Do not forget how they both felt and acted before Frau Kadden's sickness. The old feelings will return, and you,

my dear fellow, will soon forget this little bit of enthusiasm which you have caught by a sick-bed."

Elizabeth wrote to her grandparents telling them of the good news. A note was also despatched to Aunt Julchen at the Oberförsterei, and to her anxious parents, and in her great joy, even Cousin Emilie was not forgotten.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

ELIZABETH spent the Advent season very quietly. Frau Budmar meanwhile had returned to Woltheim. The young wife's days were fully occupied with attendance upon the invalid. If occasionally during this interval the young officer lapsed into the old-time impatience, although restricted to a certain quick peremptory look, Elizabeth felt glad, for he had been too long a time strangely gentle. But as he eagerly inquired of the Doctor how soon he would permit him to sit up, and when he thought it probable he could go out, and was rather curtly informed he was not for the present to attempt to rise from his bed, and it would be necessary to learn over again to walk, his impatience broke through all bounds. The old physician was not offended by his patient's irritability; on the contrary, he assured the invalid with a smile that the return of his natural temperament was the best sign of his recovery, and that he did not doubt that after his long sickness his habitual characteristics would assert themselves with redoubled force, and the long-lost cognomen would again reassert itself.

Kadden could not but laugh, and when his glance fell upon his groom's broad, beaming face, he said playfully, "Wilhelm, what do you say to going back to the good old times?"

"I don't object," was the ready answer.

It was decided that upon Christmas day the invalid should for the first time attempt to sit up, and that upon Holy Eve the children and servants were to assemble in the convalescent's room and then and there receive their gifts. All was ready for the festival; at twilight Elizabeth and her little son, accompanied by Stottenheim, attended vespers. Our light-headed Lieutenant felt perfectly at home in the little household, and assured Frau Kadden that if he remained but one day in his lonely room he was home-sick for the cheerful nursery.

At the close of the pleasant services the little party hastened home. The church stood some distance from their dwelling; the night was frosty, the stars shone clear and bright overhead, and the ground beneath their feet was covered with a soft carpeting of snow. It was a traditional Christmas Eve, and Elizabeth's heart glowed with the Christmas gladness. As they approached the house she observed that the room in which the festival was to be celebrated was unusually brilliant. "What does that mean!" she exclaimed in surprise; "who could have lighted our Christmas tree?"

"Mamma, maybe the Christ-child has lighted it," said Frederick in explanation. Stottenheim was charmed with his little favorite's answer.

Hurrying up the steps they met the groom in the ante-room, whose broad face fairly beamed with pleasure; Johanna too met them with the little Marie, her manner indicative of unwonted excite-

ment; even the cook made her appearance, and seemed to be listening for a coming step. Scarcely had the church-goers laid aside their wraps, when the door leading from the adjoining apartment opened, and our young cuirassier in full uniform stood upon the threshold. The surprise was complete; Elizabeth's heart swelled with thankfulness, Frederick forgot for the moment the Christmas tree; but the first greeting was for the dear wife and mother, and the little fellow in his disappointment at not receiving the chief recognition, turned to his friend the Lieutenant, and was led by him to the brilliant tree, and shown his many pretty Christmas gifts. The evening was spent merrily, Stottenheim taking great pleasure in seeing the delight of the little ones; and the smile that lighted up his bronzed face was honest and full of sympathy. Last of all they gave thanks to the dear Christ-child for the pleasure He had given them, and sang a carol of praise in His honor.

"Oh they sang, and I ween that never
The carol on earth shall cease,
'Glory to God in the Highest,
On earth good will and peace.'"

After the Advent season there followed a succession of tranquil, quiet days. The patient continued to convalesce, but slowly; and was obliged to admit that he felt better lying upon his couch than when he attempted to sit up. The month of January was cold, and the weather inclement, the first few days of February also; then mild weather set in, and

occasionally the sun shone with a promise of approaching spring. Here and there bits of green could be seen in the fields, looking longingly and expectantly up to the blue sky and the sunshine; and the larks trilled their sweet songs as though they thought that spring had come.

All Nature waited longingly for the coming of spring-time; so also did our invalid in the little house in Braunhausen. At first he slowly and feebly paced up and down the sunny little courtyard, then his walk was extended to the dry garden paths, and by degrees to the grassy enclosure beyond. At length he was able to call upon his comrades, who had so frequently visited him and so genuinely sympathized with him during his long illness. Before many weeks of spring had passed, the young officer had almost regained his former health and spirits.

CHAPTER XL.

THE eleventh of May, 1855—a charming day—the sun shone brightly. The weather seemed as though made expressly for the festival—the golden wedding of the grand-parents. The old gray mansion with its armorial bearings, lofty windows, and spacious apartments, was made ready for the reception of its many guests. Capacious as it was, it could not accommodate all who were invited to be present. Elizabeth accordingly had thrown open the little house at Braunhausen. The pleasant bow-windowed room was set apart for Aunts Wina and Paula, while the guest-chamber nearest her own was assigned to her parents. All the many preparations were at length satisfactorily completed, and she awaited in a state of pleasurable excitement the arrival of her guests.

The summer following her husband's illness Elizabeth's maiden aunts paid their second visit to Braunhausen, which gave them unbounded satisfaction. Both sisters agreed in thinking that their niece was a grateful child, who recognized what was due to her father's sisters. She was now as respectful as their exacting natures demanded, and much more lenient to their many foibles than she had been in the past. If occasionally she lapsed into the old, too well-remembered ways, her husband

would quietly recall her to herself. This did not escape shrewd Aunt Wina's all-observant eye, and was duly commented upon in the privacy of their own apartment by the selfish old ladies. Each succeeding year thereafter they sojourned for a season with the little household in Braunhausen; and, upon each recurring visit, they were more and more convinced of their young favorite's happiness; their esteem and affection also increased from year to year for their handsome, courteous host. They were ten years older than when we first made their acquaintance, and the fascinations of society and the glamour of their pleasure-loving life was gradually diminishing. Unfortunately they were strangers to that peace which alone has power to make happy the closing days of life. The tranquil rest that they experienced in their beloved niece's home was an unwonted refreshment to their world-weary hearts.

As they stood by the window they heard Elizabeth's clear voice calling them into the bright, pleasant garden. Here, where the evening sunshine poured over the lawn through the tender green of shrub and budding rose tree, she had spread her table. Soon the happy household gathered about it.

Frau Kühneman's once-troubled heart was filled with thankfulness as she gazed upon the bright face of her dear daughter, and witnessed the perfect happiness of her home life. Elizabeth experienced genuine pleasure in providing, for the comfort and

entertainment of her guests, who enjoyed, as only the crowded city people can, the pleasant garden whose blossoming trees were redolent with fragrance, the clear bright blue of the eastern sky, the mellow light of the setting sun, and the bounteous and inviting repast wherewith the snowy damask (a cherished memorial from out the old heir-loom) was spread.

Kadden's comrade, Stottenheim, made one of the happy group. He was married to Cäcilie, who made him a good and sensible wife; the beneficial influence which she exerted upon his character was plainly to be seen. Although still somewhat superficial, he was a valuable member of society in Braunhausen, his good-natured shrewdness deserving and receiving recognition. During all this lapse of years, Kadden and he ever remained genuine and helpful friends. Colonel von Bonsak had meanwhile been removed from the garrison at Braunhausen. Adolfine was married and was leading a life in accordance with the frivolous Frau Bandow's teachings. The two elder sisters came occasionally to Braunhausen and acted the *rôle* of sentimental aunts to Cäcilie's children. The successor of Colonel Bonsak, although not churchly, was a more earnest and conscientious man than was his predecessor, and his good wife at once identified herself with the little religious society in the town, and was associated with Frau Kadden in many a kindly plan for the good of the neighboring poor.

Before the going down of the sun, the entire

company strolled to the grassy enclosure that lay beyond the garden, where the field flowers were in bloom. Elizabeth and her sisters plucked the dainty blossoms as they went. The air was filled with fragrance, and the corn-flowers, asters and red poppies "were glowing with their evening splendors. Every tint was so light, so transparent, yet so intense, that the whole scene looked more like an illuminated picture in some splendid missal, than a nook of the real world." Upon reaching the grassy bank upon the opposite side of the field the party seated themselves, and to Elizabeth's delight, prevailed upon her husband to sing the Lorelei. The little ones, who were familiar with the words of the ballad accompanied their father with their sweet young voices.

The following day was an exact counterpart of that eventful May morn in the year of our Lord 1805. The sky was bright, the balmy air redolent with the fragrance of blossoming tree and shrub, the wood was clad in tender green, and from out the fresh dewy mead flashed hundreds of iridescent gems. In the cool sweet air of the early morning, amid the peace and beauty of this lovely May-day, Herr von Budmar and his good wife were seen crossing the mead, and strolling beneath the shadowy elms by the clear brook-side as they had done fifty long years ago, their goal the same as then, the old trysting-place the green fir height. The summit reached, they sat down upon the self-same stones and gazed thence upon the fragrant

May world; and if not so merry and active as they had been fifty years ago, their hearts were filled with that quiet tranquil happiness, the gracious compensation of those who are nearing the end of life's journey.

"My dear Fritz," said the golden-bride, "surely goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of our life. We have very much to be grateful for. In the midst of what a large happy circle will we celebrate to-day our beautiful festival. From this height we look down upon our home with its many beloved guests; even so will our freed spirits soon look down from the bright world above, upon our children and our children's children." Yes, they stood waiting in blissful peace for Heaven's portals to open, and receive them into the Paradise above.

When they returned the whole house was in commotion. All of the children, great and small, had assembled. It was almost time for the party to meet together in the church; before doing so, they must array themselves in holiday attire. The Frau Oberförsterin was of course the tiring-woman for the golden-bride; and now all repaired to their several apartments, and for a short space of time quiet settled down upon the old gray house.

The bridegroom stood alone in the quaint living-room, clad in holiday dress, with the customary spray of golden myrtle upon his breast. He stood musingly by the window, thinking of the time so long ago, when in blissful expectation he awaited

the coming of his youthful bride. He was still absorbed in pleasing recollections, when the door softly opened and the subject of his thoughts entered. Her figure was still slender and erect, her bearing free and graceful. She was arrayed in her bridal dress of fifty years ago, with the single exception of a rich white silk kerchief adorned with beautiful old point, which was crossed upon her bosom. Upon her head rested a small white coiffe, encircled by the golden wreath. Herr Budmar gazed at his dear bride, the good wife, the faithful mother—upon the same smooth brow, the same large child-like eyes, the same bright countenance, as of fifty years ago. Tears rushed to his eyes as he took her in his arms and clasped her to his heart.

"I thank thee, my wife, for the goodness, the faithfulness and love, which thou hast bestowed upon me during all these gathered years," he said, in a voice tremulous with emotion. "I cannot repay thee, but the Lord will reward thee for it."

She could not speak. She only looked lovingly into his dear face through a mist of tears.

When they had taken their places upon the old sofa beneath the long-prized picture, Frau Budmar's gaze was riveted in unbounded astonishment upon the opposite wall, upon which hung a counterpart painting of a young bride with a cuirassier officer by her side. "Otto! Elizabeth!" they simultaneously exclaimed.

Frau Budmar had frequently expressed a desire to have a likeness of her favorite granddaughter;

"then when the time comes, as come it must," she had said, "when I am confined within the limits of the living-room, I can always look upon the dear face of my grandchild." Elizabeth had long decided to have her husband's portrait taken, as well as her own, and have them ready for the golden wedding.

At this moment uncle Charles entered the room arrayed in a new black suit, his head grey, his back bent, seventy-eight years old. He had almost lost his hearing, but was still able to carry on his business as a landed proprietor as shrewdly and as successfully as ever. His eldest nephew, Wilhelm, had received the appointment of Landrath at Woltheim, and was of great assistance to his old uncle.

Frau Budmar led the aged man in front of the new picture. He was delighted. "Our darling!" he said over and over again caressingly—the grandmother meanwhile smiling a sweet assent.

"Do you remember how she looked twenty-five years ago, sister?" he asked.

"She is still the same dear warm-hearted child, who threw her little arms around us all, and included even the chair and table within the circle of her expansive love."

"And the grandmother's heart is at last free from care," said her husband as he drew near.

As they stood by the window they saw Elizabeth and her husband coming through the garden, who, seeing the grandparents, quickened their steps and hastened to greet the venerable pair.

Pastor Schlosser delivered the address in honor of the occasion. Uncle Charles' vocation was unmistakable; the old Herr had spared neither time nor expense in preparation for this festival, and was an attentive and most bountiful host. Old Frederick was clad in a brand-new livery, so that he might take part worthily in the ceremonies of the occasion. For some years past he had been advanced to the position of Uncle Charles' valet, and was ever his constant attendant; the faithful servant's work was made light to suit his weight of years. The old greys were dead, the new horses young and restive, and were mostly at the service of the new Landrath. To-day the old groom acted in the capacity of butler at the wedding feast; his deferentially respectful manner, and his stiff old-time politeness were a never-failing source of quiet amusement to the sprightly youngsters.

After the formal sumptuous dinner, the lovely May evening was spent in strolling through the pleasant garden, so full of "peace and fragrance;" but when the twilight deepened, the guests all gathered in the dear old living-room, sacred with memories of the past. The golden bridegroom and his gracious bride again took the place of honor upon the old carved sofa, and children and children's children gathered lovingly about them. The Oberförsterin meanwhile had seated herself at the piano.

"My children," began the venerable man, as he looked lovingly upon the happy group that sur-

rounded him, "we have sung this day anthems of praise and thanksgiving. 'It is good to sing praises unto our God: for it is pleasant, and praise is comely.' Now, at the close of our festival, I would have you join me in singing a song exultant with bright hopes of the future, worthy to be upon the lips of the redeemed, as 'they enter in through the gates into the city, and sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' 'Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. Alleluia! salvation and glory and honor and power unto the Lord our God.' Let us be glad and rejoice, looking for this blessed hope."

And now all voices blended in the exultant song:

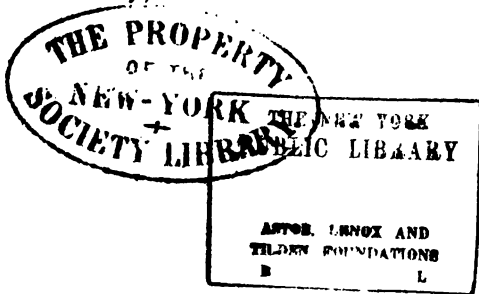
Jerusalem the glorious!
The glory of the elect!
O dear and future vision
That eager hearts expect:
Ev'n now by faith I see thee,
Ev'n here thy walls discern;
To thee my thoughts are kindled,
And strive and pant and yearn.

The Cross is all thy splendor,
The Crucified, thy praise;
His laud and benediction
Thy ransomed people raise;
Jerusalem, exulting
On that securest shore,
I hope thee, wish thee, sing thee,
And love thee evermore!

O sweet and blessed Country
Shall I ever see thy face?
O sweet and blessed Country,
Shall I ever win thy grace?
Exult, O dust and ashes!
The Lord shall be thy part;
His only, His forever,
Thou shalt be, and thou art!

Elizabeth stood by her husband's side in the recess of the window, her hand resting with the pressure of contented affection upon his arm; her sweet, pure voice rose jubilantly as she sang, while her large, clear, beautiful eyes and her lovely countenance were radiant with child-like faith and joy, as the face of one from whom all earthly care had been lifted, secure in the pure upper atmosphere of eternal blessedness and joy. Yea, she was blessed, for *all* things were hers; the life of Him whom her soul loved was hid with hers in Christ, and Christ is God's.

"He that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness." "Lo! I am with you alway, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."



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